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**EXCELLENT TEACHERS FOR MASSACHUSETTS:  
REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION  
JULY 2000**



**RECOMMENDATIONS TO:**

**GOVERNOR A. PAUL CELLUCCI  
THE LEGISLATURE  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION/BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION IN MASSACHUSETTS**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION/BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION IN  
MASSACHUSETTS**

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**\* Resigned March 9, 2000**

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# Board of Education/Board of Higher Education Joint Commission on Educator Preparation in Massachusetts

## Final Report

### I. BACKGROUND

The 1990's saw a growth of public interest nationwide in the preparation of teachers for public schools. In Massachusetts, the disappointing results of the first administration of the Massachusetts Education Certification Tests (MECT) triggered a particularly intense concern and prompted Governor A. Paul Cellucci to ask the Board of Higher Education to develop a plan for the improvement of teacher preparation in the Commonwealth. During the summer of 1998, the Board of Higher Education conducted meetings with legislators, presidents of higher education institutions, deans of colleges and schools of education, teacher education faculty, and Pre K-12 teachers. Their findings were set forth in the report *Creating Tomorrow: Preparing the Next Generation of Teachers*.

This report called for the establishment of a Joint Commission of the Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education to develop strategies for implementing a broad range of recommendations. The Commission was established, as recommended, with three representatives from each Board and two additional members appointed by each Board for a total of 10 members. Peter Nessen, a member of the Board of Higher Education, became Chair. An Executive Committee was formed, consisting of James Peyser, Chair of the Board of Education, Chair Nessen, Commissioner David P. Driscoll and the late Chancellor Stanley Z. Koplik, succeeded by Acting Chancellor Judy I. Gill.

To assist it in exploring specific issues in greater depth the Joint Commission appointed four task forces, composed of people with particular experience and expertise in the areas of teacher preparation, teacher assessment, teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher compensation. Each of these task forces reported its findings with options for the Joint Commission to consider in making its own recommendations. The reports of these task forces are attached as Appendices to this report.

The inception of the Joint Commission took place as Massachusetts was in the sixth year of implementing the Education Reform Act of 1993. Among the many important components of this reform program, the following were of particular relevance to the work of the Joint Commission: development of statewide curriculum frameworks for PreK-12 students in seven fields of study; implementation of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) based on the frameworks; implementation of the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests (MECT), now beginning its third program year; and the revision of the state's certification regulations. At the time of this report, the *Proposed Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* have been approved for public comment and are scheduled for a final vote of the Board of Education in October 2000.

## **II. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT COMMISSION AND ITS TASK FORCES**

### **A. Recertification and Professional Development**

**Background.** In May 1999, the Chair of the Board of Education asked the Joint Commission to consider and offer recommendations concerning the revision of regulations for the recertification of educators. Under the Education Reform Act, educator certificates, formerly valid for the holder's lifetime, became five-year, renewable certificates, so that educators are now required to earn Professional Development Points (PDPs) in order to renew them. Several thousand colleges, school districts, individuals, cultural institutions and other not-for-profit entities provide professional development programs that award PDPs recognized by the Department. At the time that the Joint Commission was formed, the first five-year cycle was coming to an end, and the Board of Education was considering revisions to the regulations governing renewal. Thus, recertification and professional development became the first agenda item for the Joint Commission.

The Joint Commission adopted and forwarded to the Board of Education the following recommendations concerning professional development and recertification.

#### **Recommendations for Recertification and Professional Development**

1. Candidates for recertification may earn Professional Development Points (PDPs) in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, self-directed projects, short programs, seminars, institutes, and higher education courses.
2. Greater emphasis shall be placed on advanced study and extended learning experiences in determining the number of Professional Development Points associated with a professional development activity.
3. At least 60 percent of the Professional Development Points earned shall be in an academic or scientific discipline.
4. Professional development program providers must register with and be approved by the Department of Education.
5. Professional development programs offered by approved providers must:
  - a. Focus on the content knowledge and professional skills for specific certificates stated in the Regulations for the Certification of Educational Personnel in Massachusetts (as updated).
  - b. Provide for assessments of all participants to determine whether they have acquired the knowledge and skills established in the learning goals for the program. Professional development points should be issued only to those participants who pass the assessment.
  - c. Be both intensive and extended over time, i.e., provide at least 10 hours of instruction in concentrated formats (such as seminars or institutes), with additional opportunities for follow-up activities and practice.
  - d. Demonstrate that instructors are well qualified.
  - e. Be evaluated and provide evidence of their effectiveness.

6. Employed educators must:
  - a. Show how their professional development is linked to:
    - ◆ performance improvement needs identified through their personnel evaluations.
    - ◆ school and district improvement needs and goals.
  - b. Have the activity approved by an appropriate authority, as assigned by the superintendent.
  - c. Demonstrate to their supervisor how their professional development has improved the quality of their teaching or other professional practice.
7. Applicants for recertification must engage in professional development in at least three of the five years of the renewal period or meet assessment standards approved by the Board of Education.
8. The Board of Education should give serious consideration to a system of staggered recertification.

**Actions Taken.** In September 1999, the Board of Education approved the revised *Regulations for the Recertification of Educators*, to take effect December 1. The revised regulations reflect the Joint Commission's recommendations for greater emphasis on advanced academic study and focus on the content knowledge and professional skills for specific certificates. They also require a sign-off by an employed educator's supervisor to ensure that professional development activity is aligned with the improvement plans of the school and school district. The Department has established an online registry for professional development providers and has issued guidelines that require, among other things, that providers assess the learning of participating educators and provide at least 10 hours of instruction in a single topic as conditions for issuing Professional Development Points. The Department currently lacks the staff resources to undertake formal approval of the several thousand providers now offering professional development in Massachusetts.

## **B. Linking Program Approval to Pass Rates on the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests (MECT)**

**Background.** Concern about the quality of teacher preparation in Massachusetts mirrored a nationwide concern. In 1998, Congress amended Title II of the Higher Education Act to require states receiving funds under the Act to report pass rates on certification tests for the graduates of all state-approved preparation programs. Institutions losing program approval (the right to endorse candidates for certification) in their states will lose Federal funding under the Act both for preparation programs and students enrolled in them. The legislation does not require states to use pass rates on certification tests as a standard for approving preparation programs. However, at the time the Act was passed, several states had already begun to do so, and the Board of Education had adopted a resolution calling for a minimum pass rate of 80 percent for approved programs in 1998.

The Board of Education asked the Joint Commission to develop recommendations for implementing this policy, including the resolution of such issues as what the pass rate should be, how to define cohorts of test takers, how to respond to programs with unsatisfactory pass rates, and when to implement the policy. At that time, Massachusetts was reporting institutional pass rates after each quarterly test administration and including all candidates enrolled in an institution who took any part of the test and were accepted by the institution. Federal guidelines, developed to implement the Act, called for reporting once a year, counting only candidates who had completed a program in a given year, and including only the candidate's most recent test score.

The Joint Commission adopted the following recommendations for the Board of Education.

**Recommendations for Implementing an 80 Percent Pass Rate on the MECT as a Requirement for Program Approval**

- 1. Require passing the CLST before student teaching.** Candidates for teaching certificates should be required to pass the Communication and Literacy Skills Test (CLST) of the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests before being admitted to student teaching in any public school in the Commonwealth. Institutions may make additional requirements, including other portions of the MECT, prior to admission to the program or to student teaching.
- 2. A minimum pass rate should be a requirement for program approval.** Institutions sponsoring teacher preparation programs should be required to achieve a minimum pass rate on all tests required by the state for teacher certification as a condition of program approval. For purposes of calculating pass rates, institutions must include all students who have taken any test required for certification and have successfully completed all components of their programs and may not exclude any students solely on the basis of failure to pass the tests.
- 3. The initial standard should be a pass rate of 80 percent.** Every institution or entity offering a teacher preparation program should achieve a pass rate of 80 percent for tests taken for teacher candidates who complete its programs. The Department may consider raising this standard in the future.
- 4. The standard should apply to all kinds of preparation programs.** The standard for pass rates should apply to all entities seeking program approval, including colleges and universities, school districts, and other organizations offering preparation programs.
- 5. Massachusetts should use definitions and reporting standards that are consistent with federal practice.** In calculating pass rates for certification programs, the Board of Education should observe federal definitions of cohorts and methods of calculating pass rates.
- 6. Institutions failing to achieve the 80 percent pass rate should receive warnings, technical assistance, and credit for improvement before the imposition of sanctions.** Failure to achieve the established pass rate in any given

year should trigger a review of the institution's teacher preparation programs and the provision of technical assistance where necessary. The Board of Education should establish guidelines for crediting improvement toward the required pass rate and other standards of program quality before imposing sanctions.

7. **First sanctions should be applied two years after the 1999-2000 Annual Report on the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests.** Program providers failing to meet the 80 percent pass rate for 1999-2000 should be monitored by the Commissioner. Those failing to make satisfactory progress after two years should be designated "at-risk of becoming low performing." Those failing to meet the 80 percent pass rate after three years should be designated as "low performing" and should be subject to withdrawal of program approval by vote of the Board of Education.

### **C. Plan for State Response to Preparation Programs Failing to Meet the Minimum Pass Rate**

**Background.** The Higher Education Act also requires states receiving funds under the Act to develop "a procedure to identify and assist...low-performing programs of teacher preparation within institutions of higher education."

The Joint Commission adopted the following recommendations to the Board of Education as a basis for complying with this requirement. A chart showing how this plan would work over time is presented on the following page.

#### **Recommendations for State Response to Preparation Programs Failing to Meet the 80 Percent Pass Rate**

1. Pass rates for all program providers are a matter of public record and should be included in catalogs and other relevant documents published by all preparation program providers whether or not they meet the state's minimum pass rate on the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests (MECT).
2. Failure by a program provider to meet the state's minimum pass rate on the MECT should trigger the following actions:
  - a. The Commissioner of Education should:
    - ◆ Conduct a review of the program and publish a report.
    - ◆ Offer the provider technical assistance.
  - b. The program provider should submit a plan for improvement to the Commissioner.
  - c. The Commissioner should monitor the program for two years.
  - d. Two years after the initial below-minimum pass rate, the Commissioner should evaluate the provider's progress.
    - ◆ If the minimum pass rate has been achieved, no further action should be taken.
    - ◆ If the provider's pass rate remains below the minimum standard but substantial improvement has been achieved, the Commissioner should continue to monitor the program.

MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION/BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION

**Plan for Assisting and Sanctioning Teacher Preparation Programs with Pass Rate Below 80 percent on the  
Massachusetts Education Certification Test**

**Program  
fails to meet 80%  
pass rate on MECT**

**Year 1**

Program provider fails to meet 80% pass rate on the MECT

Commissioner monitors program

**Commissioner**

- Publishes pass rates
- Conducts a review of program and issues a report
- Offers technical assistance

**Program Provider**

- Includes pass rate data in its publications
- Submits plan for improvement to the Commissioner

**Year 2**

Commissioner determines if satisfactory progress has been made

If "yes", but not 80%, continues to monitor

If "yes", and 80%, then no further action

If "no," designates program as "at risk of becoming low-performing."

**Year 3**

If program provider fails to meet 80% pass rate, Commissioner

- Designates provider as "low-performing"
- Recommends to the Board of Education that it withdraw approval from some or all of the provider's programs

Provider must wait two years to apply to the Department for reinstatement.

Providers meeting the 80% rate in Year 4 after two or three years of failing to do so, will be designated "low-performing" and subject to withdrawal of approval if they fail to meet the required rate in at least two of the three succeeding years.

- ◆ If substantial progress has not been achieved, the Commissioner should designate the program as “at risk of becoming low performing.”
- e. Program providers failing to meet the minimum pass rate after three years should be designated as “low performing.” The Commissioner should recommend that the Board of Education withdraw approval from some or all of the provider’s programs.
- f. Providers that meet the required pass rate after two or three years of failing to do so, must meet that pass rate in at least two of the three succeeding years, or they will be designated “low performing” and be subject to withdrawal of program approval.

3. Providers losing program approval must wait two years to apply to the Department for reinstatement

**Action Taken.** In its *Proposed Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval in Massachusetts*, the Department of Education has included provisions linking the approval of preparation programs with an 80 percent pass rate on the MECT and adopting federal standards for defining cohorts (who should be counted) and calculating pass rates. The new regulations follow Joint Commission recommendations in providing for a process of monitoring and assisting programs that fail to meet the standard pass rate and further provide that a vote of the Board of Education will be required to withdraw approval from an entire institution’s programs. The *Proposed Regulations* do not require candidates to complete the Communication and Literacy Skills Test prior to student teaching. Reports indicate that many preparation programs are establishing this requirement on their own.

#### **D. Enhancement of Data Capability for Program Approval**

**Background.** At an early meeting of the Commission, staff of the Department of Education reported on the need for an integrated system of data collection and analysis for policy-making purposes, for preparation program accountability, and for meeting the reporting requirements of the federal government under Title II of the Higher Education Act.

The Department of Education currently draws on data from a number of sources, such as its own reports from school districts, records of the Certification Office, results of the MECT, and the personnel records of the Massachusetts and Boston Teachers Retirement Boards. Until now, these sources of information have not been integrated and have not provided essential information in an accessible form for policy purposes. There has been, for example, no computerized access by the state to the number of candidates graduated from each preparation program annually, the number of each program’s graduates employed in the state’s public schools, or any information about the satisfaction of school administrators with the graduates of particular programs.

The Joint Commission adopted the following recommendations for the Board of Education concerning data on teacher preparation programs. (The Joint Commission made further recommendations with respect to improving data resources on the

employment of teachers in response to the Report of the Task Force on Recruitment and Retention. See page 11.)

### **Recommendations Concerning Enhancement of Data Capability for Program Approval**

1. The Joint Commission endorses the principle of requiring providers of teacher preparation programs to collect, publish, and report to the Department data on their admission standards, graduation rates, and initial employment of graduates as a condition of program approval.
2. The information gathered should be published in a context that informs the public concerning the provider's preparation programs and enables prospective teachers to make informed choices.
3. The Department of Education should establish an integrated data system that permits tracking of educators from enrollment in preparation programs through program completion, certification, employment, and recertification.
4. The Department should work with program providers to develop uniform instruments for surveying program graduates about the value of the preparation provided and employers about the teaching readiness of the program's graduates.
5. The Department should work with program providers to acquire information as to which school districts employ a program's graduates.

**Action Taken.** The Department of Education has taken the following actions with respect to improving its data capability for teacher preparation programs.

- ◆ The *Proposed Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* require preparation programs to report annually to the Department data on the number of candidates enrolled, the number who have completed their programs, and the number obtaining employment as teachers.
- ◆ In 1999, the Department applied for and received a three-year, \$3.5 million Educator Quality Enhancement Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, of which \$1.4 million will be used over the next three years to develop an educational personnel data collection and analysis system.

### **E. Teacher Preparation Programs**

**Background.** The Joint Commission appointed the Task Force on Teacher Preparation Programs to explore the relationship between specific features of such programs—admissions, curriculum, and collaboration with arts and sciences faculties—and the quality of the teacher candidates they were producing. Jean Krasnow, former Dean of the Graduate School at Wheelock College, chaired the Task Force. In accordance with its charge, the Task Force conducted research and discussion in the following areas:

- ◆ Admissions and program standards for students in teacher education programs
- ◆ The extent of liberal arts course work required for students in teacher preparation programs

- ◆ The involvement of liberal arts faculty in the design, implementation, and assessment of education programs
- ◆ Strategies to encourage and support “best practice” in the field of teacher preparation

The full membership of the Task Force and its Report are attached as Appendix A.

The Joint Commission adopted the following recommendations for the Board of Education, The Board of Higher Education, and colleges and universities with respect to teacher preparation programs.

### **Recommendations Concerning Teacher Preparation Programs**

1. **Admissions.** Providers should establish admissions standards consistent with their institution’s mission and should document adherence to them in their annual reports to the Department of Education.
2. **Education major.** Colleges and universities should inform teacher candidates that the state does not require a major in education as a condition for certification. Public colleges and universities should not require a major in education as a condition for endorsement for certification.
3. **Induction and mentoring.** Induction and mentoring programs should be extended to all beginning teachers for at least the first year of employment.
4. **Innovative routes to certification.** The Joint Commission supports the development of innovative routes to certification.
5. **Collaboration of Department of Education and Board of Higher Education.**  
The Joint Commission urges the Department of Education and the Board of Higher Education to form a joint working group to develop proposals for improved teacher preparation.

**Action Taken.** The *Proposed Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* reflect these recommendations. The regulations do not prescribe admissions standards to teacher preparation programs. They do require “all school districts to provide an induction program for teachers in their first year of practice” and establish standards and annual reporting requirements for such programs. They further provide for several routes to teacher licensure in addition to the traditional undergraduate route at colleges and universities.

As this report is being written, the proposed regulations do not require preparation programs to articulate their admissions standards to the public or document adherence to them in their publications or annual reports to the Department. The recommendations concerning the education major, which are directed at colleges and universities and the Board of Higher Education, have yet to be acted upon. Finally, collaboration between the Department of Education and the Board of Higher Education, while existing in many areas of operation, has not yet been formalized into a joint working group.

## F. Assessment of Teacher Candidates

**Background.** In its proposed revisions to the regulations for licensure of educators, the Department of Education has provided for an assessment of classroom performance of teacher candidates both as an exit requirement from preparation programs and as an option for qualifying for the final, or “professional,” stage of licensure. These assessments will complement the MECT, which tests subject matter knowledge, by assessing candidates’ mastery of teaching skills. To explore the range of assessments that would be appropriate for this purpose, and to better understand the existing range of assessments of teacher candidates, the Joint Commission appointed a Task Force on Teacher Assessment. Fred Tirrell, former Superintendent of the Needham Public Schools and currently a faculty member of Bridgewater State College, agreed to chair the task force. Its charge was to:

- ◆ Take an inventory of assessments of teacher candidates already in use by preparation programs
- ◆ Consider whether and what kind of additional assessments for licensure would be useful to further ensure teacher quality
- ◆ Explore the possibility of linking assessment for licensure with student learning outcomes, either in student teaching or in the years of practice preceding the award of the professional license.

The full membership of the Task Force and its Report, including an addendum by Task Force member Dale Ballou, are attached as Appendix B.

After discussing the Report the Joint Commission adopted the following recommendations for the Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education.

### **Recommendations Concerning Teacher Assessment**

1. The Communication and Literacy Skills portion of the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests should be amended to include a module that tests candidates in mathematical skills.
2. The Board of Higher Education should require each public institution to identify a core body of knowledge in the arts and sciences and develop an assessment of such knowledge to be passed by every student as a requirement for graduation.
3. Before any person is certified to teach, he or she should pass a liberal arts competency exam. If his or her institution of higher education does not require one, the Department of Education should establish equivalent exams to fulfill that requirement.
4. The Department of Education should continue research and development of a performance-based assessment of candidates for the Standard Certificate/Professional License. The assessment should evaluate a candidate’s effectiveness in the classroom and mastery of content-specific pedagogy in the discipline for the license sought. The assessment instrument should be based on the state’s professional teaching standards and scored by state-trained assessors.

Local annual evaluations of a candidate's teaching performance should be submitted by the school district and considered as part of the assessment.

5. Professional status should be awarded no sooner than five years after initial employment. The Provisional Certificate with Advanced Standing/Initial License should be valid for five years as well. Professional status should be awarded after standard/professional licensure, not before it.

**Action Taken.** With respect to Recommendation 4, the *Proposed Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* provide for performance assessment as noted above. The Department is continuing with the development of such assessments through participation in a nationwide project sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), through its federal grant under Title II of the Higher Education Act, and through its own grants administered at the state level. The Department is also following closely the development of performance assessments in other states.

The remaining items on the list of recommendations will be transmitted to the appropriate Boards over the coming months.

## **G. Recruitment and Retention of Educators**

**Background.** Several current trends have focused the attention of policy makers on teacher recruitment and retention: the aging of the teacher workforce and the impending increase in retirements; expected continuing growth of student enrollment; and public interest in reducing class size and providing early childhood education. Concerned that both the quality and quantity of candidates are in danger of significant shortfall in Massachusetts, the Joint Commission appointed a special Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention, headed by Manuel Monteiro, Assistant Vice-President for Human Resources at Boston University, to examine the following questions and topics and report on policy options to the Joint Commission.

- ◆ The supply and demand for educators over the next decade
- ◆ Ways to broaden the pool of candidates
- ◆ Incentives and barriers to entry to the profession

The full membership of the Task Force and its Report are attached as Appendix C.

After discussion of the Task Force Report, the Joint Commission adopted the following recommendations.

### **Recommendations for Improving Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

1. **Develop a system of data collection and analysis.** The Department of Education should continue to give high priority to the development and maintenance of a comprehensive system for collecting and analyzing data on educators in Massachusetts. Such a system should provide essential information about the following topics:
  - ◆ Educator supply and demand

- ◆ The effectiveness of programs of recruitment and retention
- ◆ The quality and persistence in the profession of teachers prepared by various routes to certification

2. **Expand existing recruitment and incentive programs.** The Board of Higher Education and the Board of Education should actively market and promote existing scholarship and recruitment programs.
3. **Improve collaboration between higher education and school districts.** The Department of Education should work to improve collaboration between higher education institutions and school districts in identifying workforce needs for teachers and preparing qualified teachers to meet those needs.
4. **Reduce barriers to certification.** The Department of Education should reduce barriers to certification by eliminating requirements unrelated to job performance, such as the requirement for a master's degree for standard certification.
5. **Develop career ladders for teachers.** The Department of Education should convene a working group to consider ways of expanding its existing efforts to develop structured career paths for teachers. Such career paths should provide increasing levels of responsibility that merit corresponding increases in compensation.
6. **Reform the system of pensions and other fringe benefits for teachers.** The Department of Education should conduct a review of the system of pensions and fringe benefits for teachers and make recommendations to the Legislature and other appropriate bodies for reforms that will make Massachusetts more competitive with other states and professions in the recruitment of teachers.
7. **Establish a task force to study and recommend adequate levels of teacher compensation.** The Joint Commission shall appoint a task force to conduct research and make recommendations concerning the scale of compensation necessary to attract and retain teachers of the highest quality for the classrooms of the Commonwealth. This task force shall report its findings to the Joint Commission by the end of June, and the Joint Commission will review its findings and then issue its own report.

**Action Taken.** As noted earlier, The Department of Education is using \$1.4 million of a federal grant to develop a comprehensive data collection and analysis system for educational personnel. Parts of the system are already in place, and the Department expects full implementation by the summer of 2001. The Department has undertaken to reduce barriers to licensure in its *Proposed Regulations for Licensure* by providing for a number of post-baccalaureate teacher preparation routes in addition to the traditional undergraduate program. The *Proposed Regulations* also provide for a performance assessment as an option for qualifying for the professional license (standard certificate).

Concerning Recommendation 5, 10 schools are currently participating in the Department's Teacher Career Advancement Program (T-CAP), which supports efforts to develop multiple career paths and expanded roles for teachers.

With respect to Recommendation 6, the Task Force was concerned about a wide range of benefits issues, but particularly the high (9 percent) contribution teachers make to the statewide teachers' retirement fund. At this writing, the Legislature has passed over the Governor's veto a bill that will increase rather than reduce this contribution rate in order to finance early retirement for many of the state's veteran teachers.

The Task Force recommended that the state establish a minimum statewide salary for teachers. Seeking more information in order to decide how much the minimum should be, the Commission appointed another task force to, in the words of Recommendation 7, "conduct research and make recommendations concerning the scale of compensation necessary to attract and retain teachers of the highest quality for the classrooms of the Commonwealth."

## **H. Teacher Compensation**

**Background.** In accordance with Recommendation 7, above, the Commission appointed a Task Force on Teacher Compensation, which was chaired by James Fraser, Dean of the School of Education at Northeastern University. Its report called for a package of incentives directed largely at beginning teachers. The full membership of the Task Force and its Report are attached as Appendix D. The Joint Commission, after discussion of the Report, adopted the following recommendations.

### **Recommendations Concerning Teacher Compensation**

**Introduction.** The Joint Commission has recommended new requirements and more rigorous standards for the teaching profession. To attract candidates who will meet these new standards, the Commission recommends that the Commonwealth adopt the following package of incentives. The package contains a variety of proposals to meet the varied personal and financial needs of today's potential teacher recruits. Because the Commission has focused its recommendations on raising standards for entry into the profession and because attrition among teachers is highest in the first three to five years, these proposals emphasize incentives to new teachers. Finally, the Joint Commission notes that any package of incentives should correspond to the higher financial incentives provided both by other professions and by school districts in nearby states.

- 1. Statewide Minimum Salary.** The state should fund a statewide minimum teacher's salary of \$35,000.
- 2. An Extended Year Option for Selected Teachers.** Funds should be made available to districts to provide \$5,000 for extended-year contracts to as many as 10 percent of their teachers, who would perform specified instruction-related tasks during the added time.
- 3. Salary Enhancements for Teachers in High-Need Areas.** A fund should be established for salary enhancements of \$4,000 per year to the base pay of new teachers in school districts and teaching fields designated by the Commissioner as having the greatest need for candidates.

4. **Eliminating Financial Barriers.** The state should build upon its existing programs of scholarships and loan reimbursement.

- The Board of Higher Education should seek funding to expand its two teacher scholarship programs--Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarships and the Incentive Program for Aspiring Teachers--to students at non-public institutions with scholarships equal to the average tuition and fees at public institutions.
- The Department of Education should be authorized to build upon its current loan reimbursement program--Attracting Excellence to Teaching--by providing reimbursement for education loans to any employed teacher recommended by a school district. The program should reimburse at the rate of 10 percent per year up to \$1,500 per year, and 15 percent per year up to \$2,500 per year for those who teach in high-need fields and school districts.
- The state should establish a specified number of stipends of \$17,500 for post-baccalaureate candidates entering teaching through apprenticeship or other clinical preparation programs provided for in the *Proposed Regulations for Educator Licensure*.
- The state should establish funds to support 50 percent of the professional development costs, up to \$800 per year, to teachers during their first three years of teaching. These funds should be used for professional development approved by the appropriate authority in the teacher's school district as provided in the Department's recertification regulations.

### III. NEXT STEPS

During the life of the Joint Commission, the Boards of Education and Higher Education have taken many initiatives toward improving the quality of the Commonwealth's teacher workforce. Some of the Commission's recommendations have already found their way into regulation, agency policy, or grant programs. These actions have been summarized in the sections of this report headed "Action Taken." There are also many recommendations of the Joint Commission that have yet to be acted on. In the following section, we draw attention to these agenda items and direct recommendations to the agency or public body responsible for their realization.

#### A. Recommendations to the Governor and Legislature

- ♦ **Fund the package of incentives for teacher candidates recommended by the Joint Commission.** The Governor, the Legislature and the Department of Education took significant steps to strengthen the pool of teacher candidates in 1998 with the Teacher Signing Bonus Program and the promotion and expansion of the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program. The Board of Higher Education also responded to the need with two scholarship programs for prospective teachers at public colleges and universities. These are strong initial steps, but they apply to only a small proportion of the several thousand teachers that Massachusetts will need to

recruit in each year of the coming decade. Serious shortages are already reported in high-need teaching fields and in hard-to-staff schools and school districts, and the disappointing results on the teacher certification tests suggest a shortfall in quality across all fields and school districts.

With the teacher certification tests, the minimum pass rate requirement for preparation programs, the MCAS, and the development of the school and district accountability programs, the state has used the tools of accountability to raise academic and professional standards. To ensure that candidates who are able to meet these new standards will appear in sufficient numbers to staff all schools in the Commonwealth, more must be done to make teaching in Massachusetts competitive with other comparable professions and with teaching in nearby states. The Joint Commission therefore urges the Governor and Legislature to review these recommendations and to fund the package of incentives described in Section H above.

- ◆ **Fund induction and mentoring programs for all new teachers.** This recommendation was made independently by all of the first three task forces that reported to the Joint Commission. The Department of Education has sought funding for this purpose for the past two years and has included a requirement that districts provide such programs to all beginning teachers in the *Proposed Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval*. Funds from the state are necessary to ensure that the benefits of adequate support to beginning teachers are realized in all districts of the Commonwealth.

## B. Recommendations to the Board of Higher Education

- ◆ **Assess a core body of knowledge in the arts and sciences.** The Board of Higher Education should require each public institution to identify a core body of knowledge in the arts and sciences and develop an assessment of such knowledge to be passed by every student as a requirement for graduation.
- ◆ **Extend incentives for recruiting new teachers.** The Board of Higher Education should seek funds under its two scholarship programs for teachers--the Incentives for Aspiring Teachers and Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship programs—for aspiring students who attend private colleges and universities.
- ◆ **Ensure that colleges require only appropriate majors.** The Board of Higher Education should take steps to ensure that no public college or university requires a major in education as a condition for endorsement for teacher licensure.

## C. Recommendations to the Board of Education.

- ◆ **Complete a comprehensive data system on educational personnel.** The Department of Education should complete the development of its comprehensive system of data collection and analysis on educational personnel. It should ensure that the system is capable of providing essential information about the supply of and

demand for educators, the effectiveness of programs of recruitment and retention, and the quality and persistence in the profession of teachers prepared by various programs and routes to certification.

- ◆ **Improve the licensure and assessment of teacher candidates.** The Board and Department of Education should:
  - Include a provision in the revised regulations for licensure requiring teacher candidates to pass the Communication and Literacy Skills portion of the MECT prior to student teaching.
  - Add a mathematics component to the MECT.
  - Establish a liberal arts competency examination to be taken and passed by candidates who have not already passed such an examination as an exit requirement from their college preparation program.
  - Continue research and development of a performance-based assessment of candidates for the Standard/Professional License.
  - File legislation providing that professional status be awarded after five years of service instead of three, so that professional licensure is awarded either before or at the same time as professional status.
- ◆ **Improve recruitment of teacher candidates.** The Board and Department should take the following actions to broaden and strengthen the pool of teacher candidates.
  - Inaugurate a review of the system of pensions and other fringe benefits for teachers with a view to equity between veteran and beginning teachers and to making Massachusetts competitive with other professions and other states in the recruitment of teachers.
  - Improve collaboration between higher education and school districts in identifying workforce needs for teachers and preparing qualified teachers to meet those needs.
  - Expand its current efforts to develop career ladders for teachers in school districts.
- ◆ **Strengthen professional development.** The Board of Education should seek funding to enable the Department to approve professional development providers. In the interim, it should take steps to require those who register as providers to furnish information about their qualifications and prior experience.

#### **D. Recommendation to Both Boards**

- ◆ **Form a joint working group.** The Board of Higher Education and the Board of Education should form a joint working group to develop proposals for the improvement of teacher preparation.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This report summarizes recommendations from the Joint Commission to the agencies of the Commonwealth that support and regulate the preparation of teachers for its public schools. In the final analysis, however, responsibility for the quality of teachers ultimately rests with the institutions that educate them and the schools that recruit and appoint them. The Joint Commission can recommend, the Boards of Education and Higher Education can regulate, the governor and legislature can appropriate and make laws—but in the end, all of this will be unavailing without the necessary changes that only the institutions of higher education and the schools can bring about.

The Joint Commission has not taken it upon itself to set standards of admission to educator preparation programs; to define the essential content of general education and its relation to professional preparation; to describe in detail the working conditions and opportunities for advancement that would make teaching a true profession. It is not that these do not matter—they matter greatly. However, the Commission chose to leave such concerns to the judgment of those directly responsible for them: the colleges and universities and the schools. That judgment must be responsibly and intelligently exercised, if we are to have the quality of teachers necessary to the fulfillment of our educational aspirations for the children of Massachusetts.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Report to the Joint Commission on Educator Preparation From the Task Force on Teacher Preparation Programs**

**December 16, 1999**

**JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION  
TASK FORCE ON TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

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## **TASK FORCE ON TEACHER PREPARATION** **Report to the Joint Commission**

In October of 1999, the Joint Commission on Educator Preparation appointed special task forces to research and consider specific topics: preparation programs, assessment of teacher candidates, and recruitment and retention of teachers. Peter Nessen, the Chairman of the Joint Commission, met with the chairmen of the three groups and stated: "If you could redo the system and think in new ways, perhaps remove barriers, and increase numbers of teachers, and still keep faith with the community concerning quality, what would you do?" Redoing a system implies the system is broken. While we are not in complete agreement with that assumption, we do believe that improvements are needed and we welcome the opportunity to share our thinking with the Joint Commission.

The following is the report from the task force on teacher preparation programs.

In response to the guidelines provided and the questions posed by the Joint Commission we have addressed the following specific topics:

- Admission and program standards for students in teacher preparation programs,
- The extent of liberal arts course work required for students in teacher preparation programs,
- The involvement of liberal arts faculty in the design, implementation, and assessment of teacher preparation programs, and
- Strategies to encourage and support "best practice" in the field of teacher preparation.

In considering options for action by the Joint Commission, we felt it was important to consider the extent of prescription and regulation (and the implications for the Department of Education's enforcement responsibilities) if certain actions were taken. The clear preference of the task force was for an approach that favors outcomes and incentives rather than increased regulation. However, a range of options has been presented for discussion.

### **1. Admission and program standards**

#### **DATA**

The Department of Education (DOE) has undertaken an extensive review of the standards for admission to teacher preparation programs in Massachusetts for the years 1996 and 1997. The task force added to that information as part of its catalog review, and the assessment task force has also addressed this issue in interviews with program officers.

Program admission is a process distinct from college admission and is usually the result of an application process at the end of the first or second year of college. For the 58 programs reviewed:

- 10 programs require 2.0 – 2.25 GPA for admission
- 27 programs require 2.5 – 2.8 GPA for admission
- 7 programs require 3.0 – 3.5 GPA for admission
- 11 programs have no standard
- 3 did not report

Of the eight graduate programs reporting, (1 non report), the admissions standards are uniformly higher:

- 5 programs require 3.0 GPA for admission

- 1 program requires 2.75 GPA for admission
- 2 programs require 2.5 GPA for admission

Of the total of 67 programs (undergraduate and graduate), 41 reported that a required interview was part of the program admission process

We do not yet know how many programs are requiring diagnostic tests for admission, but it is clear from the 1999-2000 catalogs that undergraduate and graduate programs are beginning to require the Communication and Literacy Skills portion of the Massachusetts Educator Certification Tests (MECT) as a requirement for beginning student teaching. In some cases this test is being used as part of the initial program admission process.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Tensions exist concerning the question of admission standards. On the one hand, a school ought not to expect its future students to demonstrate at entry the knowledge and skills it expects to convey in its programs: students come unfinished, that's why they go to school. Limiting admission because potential students do not already have what the college intends to teach seems illogical. On the other hand, colleges must make reasonable decisions about their ability and that of the potential student to accomplish the required tasks at a particular level of excellence in the span of a four-year program. These tensions are further enhanced by the public trust held by teachers. All young students deserve a qualified teacher: if a college admits an individual without a careful assessment of that individual's potential for excellence in teaching, the public suffers.

Our review suggests that there are some standards in place for admission to teacher preparation programs, and that students seeking to enter such programs often must complete applications, provide references, and demonstrate achievement in initial course work completed in the first or first two years of college.

It appears that the standards are more rigorous at the graduate level where programs have set GPA's required for admission at considerable higher levels than undergraduate programs.

There does appear to be a gap in the public perception of this.

The task force strongly supports the adoption by all schools of admissions standards to education programs and the application of internal program standards as well as the need for colleges to produce evidence of their use. This evidence is probably best demonstrated as part of the process of program approval, where criteria and evidence of how it has been applied could be demonstrated to DOE or other reviewers.

We recognize that reading and writing tests taken during the admission process to a college or a program can serve a helpful diagnostic purpose. Excellence in teaching requires the skills of assessment, and the information learned from diagnostic exercises may help college faculty address student needs early in their study and provide challenging opportunities to learn.

### **OPTIONS**

- Require admissions standards for all education programs to include: a set GPA, application, letters of reference, and when feasible an interview.
- Include as part of the Department's program approval process the written standards used for admission to the college and the education program and documentation of the use of the standards;
- Consider a minimum SAT/ACT score for college and program admission;

- Require that programs have some admissions standards but not prescribe any particular standard;
- Require passage of Communication and Literacy section of the MECT as a requirement for student teaching;
- Require a reading and writing test for admission to college for diagnostic purposes only i.e., as a means to decide what opportunities to learn can be provided by the college to particular students,
- Continue to have admissions standards entirely the responsibility of the individual colleges.

## 2. Extent of liberal arts course work for students in teacher preparation programs

### DATA

Information was gathered from a review of graduation and program requirements for all teacher preparation programs in the state in order to assess the extent of liberal arts course work required and the areas of study most frequently associated with education. Three topics that emerged for consideration are:

- Program design with regard to majors
- Program design with regard to general education requirements
- Program design with regard to majors for prospective elementary and early childhood teachers

#### Majors

There appear to be three general categories of programming for four-year undergraduate programs leading to “teaching certification”:

1. Students complete two full majors, with one major in what might be viewed as a traditional academic discipline and another in education;
2. Students complete two majors, with one in an academic discipline, often interdisciplinary and closely related to education content (for example, Human Growth and Development, liberal studies, Child in Society) and a fully developed major in education;
3. Students complete one major from the academic disciplines and educational course work in an amount similar to a minor that builds on and extends students’ work in the liberal arts.

The majority of programs follow the first model. Students seeking certification in a subject area (i.e., High School biology) follow programs in categories 1 or 3. Students seeking early childhood and elementary certification are encouraged (by the language of the catalog) to enroll in interdisciplinary majors, particularly those that are related to education. There are very few examples of category 3 for either elementary or secondary programs. (Note: Graduate students typically bring a BA/BS in a traditional academic discipline to their graduate study)

#### General Education

All programs require students to complete course work in specific areas of study. Although carrying a variety of names (general education, liberal studies, distributions, competencies, university core, liberal arts cluster) they all seek to assure that students have an experience with the range of liberal arts prior to focusing on a particular area of study. Some very tentative observations from this review include:

1. Format: While a set of general education topics is provided to the students, the course work to fulfill those requirements is rarely presented. In part a format issue, it appears to minimize the significance of the requirements and suggests a lack of priority or clarity in the identification by the faculty of courses that meet the requirements.
2. Selection: This raises the following question: can a student select any course from the department listings or are some courses considered essential, and hence only some courses fulfill the requirements?
3. Sequence: Several programs require two courses in a limited number of general education areas: are these courses to follow a sequence and thus encourage depth of study?
4. Omission: It would appear that with careful choice, in some programs a student might meet the general education requirements without work in math or laboratory science.
5. MCAS: Several programs appear to be mapping suggested course work for the general education requirements to the MCAS as a way to assure students, particularly those in elementary programs, a range of academic exposure and better success on the subject matter section of the MECT.

#### Majors for early childhood and elementary education

Students in early childhood and elementary programs are often required to do more work in child development, mathematics and literacy development within their education majors than students seeking secondary certification and are more often than secondary education students likely to major in interdisciplinary and liberal studies areas. In some cases, the catalogs indicated that in order to actually fulfill all the requirements, this student must complete credits in excess of what the college sets as the required number of credits for "regular" graduation.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The educational literature disagrees on many topics but there does seem to be agreement that individuals seeking to become teachers should complete rigorous academic programs of study and that excellence in teaching must be built on a strong academic foundation. This was the direction of the 1987 JTPP report concerning undergraduate and graduate programming in Massachusetts. The task force is concerned that the requirements of a dual major jeopardize this important goal and that some adjustments must be made to assure that students have the opportunity to complete a major program of study in depth prior to addressing issues of teaching. In fact, we are convinced that lessons in pedagogy are made more viable when a student has had in-depth experience in another discipline.

Still, the challenge presented in the preparation of teachers for early childhood and elementary grades is very real. Is a single major in the traditional disciplines with only a minor in education sufficient preparation for the academic and development demands of this position? We are not sure of the best direction for change in this area of teacher preparation. Is there a space between requiring a major and the limited introduction offered by a minor that might serve these students well? Our list of options to the Joint Commission reflects the complexity of this issue.

It would seem that there is a greater role for the general education requirements in assuring excellence in teacher preparation, either in the way the current courses are designed (i.e., as "intensives" in writing) or in the design of a new, more focused cluster of courses.

## **OPTIONS:**

- Eliminate undergraduate majors in education and require post baccalaureate training to obtain a teaching license and eventually professional status,
- Reconsider teacher preparation programs for early childhood and/or elementary teachers to seek a design that reflects rigorous academic preparation and the careful use of requirements and electives to assure completion within the stated graduation requirements, for example:
  - continue traditional fall and spring semesters, add an intern experience in January that connects course work to the community and schooling interests of the students.
- Encourage schools with education programs to focus on areas of excellence in particular fields and to avoid the goal of being “comprehensive schools of education”,
- Encourage college-to-college collaborations (i.e., Five Colleges of the Fenway, UMASS consortium) that allow students to cross register easily and colleges to develop specialization.
- Offer models of undergraduate programming that:
  - expand the liberal arts component of teacher preparation,
  - limit education course work to credits suitable for a minor,
  - develop the use of general education or distribution credits to assure coverage of MCAS topics (especially true for elementary education candidates), and
  - use certain courses within the general education cluster as writing “intensives” to strengthen student skills.

### **3. Participation by liberal arts faculty in the design, implementation, and assessment of the programs in teacher preparation: models**

#### **DATA**

The task force conducted interviews with individuals in Massachusetts involved in programs that have explicitly sought to expand the role of liberal arts in the preparation of teachers and has reviewed some materials describing programs in other parts of the country. The goal was to identify characteristics of these models and consider ways to encourage this work. (This material is closely linked to that in **section 4 “Best Practices”** with regard to preparation and induction programs. The outstanding programs appear to be constructing two partnerships at the same time: the first, between liberal arts and education faculty and the second, between colleges and the local school districts.)

Efforts to involve liberal arts faculty in education programs have taken many forms, for example:

1. External grants (ex. National Science Foundation) to college faculty in liberal arts areas to integrate field work into their courses and encourage undergraduates to consider teaching,
2. College courses in liberal arts that are closely connected to specific assignments and projects related to school based work,

3. College initiated partnerships with several school districts in which liberal arts faculty often provide advanced course work for experienced teachers,
4. College/school partnerships that have explicit roles for liberal arts faculty reflected in teaching course loads, credits etc.,
5. Joint appointments of liberal arts faculty to an education program, with student admissions going through the liberal arts departments,
6. Full 5-year integrated programs (freshmen to masters) jointly designed by liberal arts and education faculties with field work directly connected to course work,
7. Several schools within a single university focusing all student placements in a single community but at different types of institutions (schools, health organizations, etc.).

## **DISCUSSION**

What seems most striking about our review is that there does not appear to be within the colleges, any system of incentives for the collaboration of liberal arts and education faculty. In fact, within the current university structure there are serious obstacles to collaboration. Faculty work within a department structure in which decisions about course loads, use of resources, and counts are made. The research valued by the tenure processes has not, in the past, been compatible with the field-based nature of model preparation programs. The result is that some individuals discover the value of collaboration or begin, for random reasons, to work in K-12 schools and become linked to the education programs in informal ways often in addition to their regular college assignments.

For example,

- Sometimes rethinking teaching is the result of the focus of a particular college. We have an interesting example of a physics professor rethinking how to teach physics to undergraduates in light of students' (particularly female students') previous attitudes and experiences in science and the specific commitment of the college expanding the number of women in science.
- Sometimes change is the result of the work by college faculty in elementary and secondary schools or within a professional organization drafting recommendations regarding the teaching of a particular subject (math, science, etc.) at the k-12 level. These same recommendations are often not visible in the college pedagogy, and college faculty have changed their practice accordingly. (For example, inquiry mathematics and how these professional standards would look applied in college classrooms.)
- Often the work begins when the children of faculty members enter the K-12 system and, as parents and professionals, individuals begin work in the schools.

The American Council on Education has spoken recently about the critical role that college presidents must play if education programs are to change and become a genuinely integral part of the university. Clearly, collaboration (partnership, integration, etc.) within the university between liberal arts and education faculties will require leadership that represents a broader concept than any one program or department and a systemic approach to the issue of incentives.

## **OPTIONS**

*Collegewide:*

Creation of an advisory unit composed of administrators and faculty from both liberal arts and education to oversee the development of collaborations and to be

responsible for the institutional “sign off” for candidates for initial license.

- Establish collaboration between DOE and Board of Higher Education regarding enhanced role for liberal arts faculty in education programs as a condition of program approval.
- Expand DOE grant making for collaborations of liberal arts and education faculty

*Faculty:*

Options for joint research that focus on community/school issues or teaching and learning processes.

Co-design and co-teaching of some courses with support from the college for planning and assessment of the courses.

Joint development of strands of content related to education for inclusion across the liberal arts curriculum i.e. a course in the History of the Supreme Court to include material on the role of the court in educational issues.

*Students:*

Evaluate and include appropriate pedagogy-based material and courses into natural sciences, social sciences, and engineering programs and develop early incentives to encourage such majors to enter pre-K-12 teaching.

Provide an introduction to educational issues and possibilities of teaching through internships and service learning opportunities for liberal arts majors. Link these opportunities to dialogue with liberal arts and education faculty about the experiences,

- Provide financial support for students majoring in areas of high need who intend to enter teaching.

**4. Strategies that encourage and support “best practice” in the field of teacher preparation specifically with regard to initial teacher preparation, induction, and mentoring.**

*This section looks more closely at the models of partnership between colleges and the school districts. One interesting characteristic of these programs studied in Massachusetts is their attention to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the alignment of curriculum to the frameworks and MCAS requirements made possible by the close relationships with schools and the commitment to long term professional development relationships.*

**A. Development of partnerships for the preparation and support of teachers**

**1. Best practices: Preparation**

**DATA**

The task force reviewed 6 programs in Massachusetts and 10 programs in the United States that are seen as models of excellence and involve college / school partnership for the preparation of teachers. Characteristics of these programs include:

1. Small size, rigorous standards
2. Program design for graduate students or close linkages to an undergraduate/graduate program within the college
3. Year long internships in the partner schools
4. Some support for students: stipends, work study, etc.
5. College faculty in the partner schools

6. School-based faculty at the college: ex. summer institutes
7. District or school support for liaison positions
8. Significant roles for classroom teachers as mentors and as faculty
9. Joint decision making by school based and college faculty concerning curriculum and evaluation of candidates for certification
10. Institutional support
11. Field based research and publications, and often
12. Outside funding to support innovative work

## DISCUSSION

The partnerships studied have well defined models, are systemic in nature, view education as K-16 system, and show signs of long term impact on the public schools in which they work. These programs are small and the challenge is to find ways to increase the number of such programs and hence the number of teachers they prepare.

There is a national trend for the development of closer and more equal partnerships between the colleges and school systems for the preparation of teachers. Excellent programs often include a yearlong internship, classes on site at the schools, and peer relationships between college faculty and classroom teachers. Individuals at the school and district level have long criticized the separation between the courses and theory of the college experience and the realities of life in schools. This criticism calls for better partnerships and collaboration, if not an outright relocation of the locus of control for teacher preparation programs.

In response to these criticisms and the changes in certification requirements in 1993, several colleges in Massachusetts developed close collaborations with districts as well as year long internships for graduate students (some include stipends). Proposals are now being discussed in Massachusetts that would emphasize greater depth in the study of liberal arts at the undergraduate level and, at the same time, shift the preparation of teachers toward a training model and eliminate the Master's requirement for the final certificate. This change runs counter to the majority of thinking regarding the best ways to prepare teachers. At the national level, an argument is being made for creating a system parallel to other professions and requiring a post-baccalaureate degree in order to obtain a teaching license. Students in graduate programs would enter having completed a BA or BS in an academic discipline and would satisfy the need for a stronger liberal arts foundation for teachers.

The proposed changes in Massachusetts reflect the tension between theory and practice and suggest that greater content in the traditional disciplines and a shift to a training model based at the school district level is sufficient to "produce" excellence in teaching and a greater supply of teachers. This articulate, but somewhat minority view at the national level, suggests that graduate education (and overly complex certification requirements) are obstacles to entry into the teaching field and deter able students from teaching. In this thinking, lowering the barriers to entry and providing support at the district level for new teachers will increase the quality of teachers. There is conflicting research on the retention of teachers trained in this model.

The questions addressed by the Joint Commission raise serious institutional challenges for colleges: internal collaboration is difficult, collaboration with an organization external to one's own increases the points of organizational dissonance. In this case, the problems may be especially severe since neither school systems nor colleges are characterized by organizational flexibility.

These concerns suggest two principal courses of action:

- first, to provide guidelines, incentives, and support for organizational change toward collaboration for both undergraduate and graduate programs, and,
- second, to provide the opportunity for new models of teacher preparation to emerge.

If multiple providers of training are to be encouraged, statements of outcomes and defined systems of accountability must be made clear from the beginning of the innovations.

Finally, these options may suggest new and in some cases a redefined set of activities within the Department of Education, including greater collaboration with the Board of Higher Education, particularly in addressing program development in the colleges.

## OPTIONS

- Reduce the undergraduate course work in education
- Complete student teaching in college/district partner schools only
- Emphasize school district/college partnerships
  - Recommend that colleges establish External Advisory Committees of college faculty, principals, teachers, and superintendents from systems where students and graduates are teaching to hear what school districts are struggling with as a means of increasing accountability to the “client,” i.e., school systems, children, and families,
- Provide information to all teacher preparation programs on the best models identified. Hold a conference, set of workshops etc. to allow colleges to hear and learn from one another. (Massachusetts’s recipients of the Title II grant constitute one cluster of schools doing this.)
- Allow principals to hire recent graduates of these internship programs ahead of “permanent substitutes” and “lateral transfers” if they desire.
- Authorize a variety of formats and locations for both pre-professional training, and induction and mentoring to take place. For example, all of the following might become options for the preparation of teachers:
  - single school or school district based programs,
  - collaborations of school districts/EDCO,
  - college/district collaborations,
  - learning Centers
  - A statewide network of Learning Centers sponsored by the state awarded through an RFP process to private/non profit organizations whose program of study would be approved by DOE for the preparation of teachers. Grant operating permission to these entities for a set number of years and create a reporting, research, and renewal process for them.
- Focus DOE grant making to encourage and support college/school partnerships. (See discussion below.)

## 2. Best practices: Induction and mentoring of new teachers

### DATA

There are several programs to develop mentoring and induction at the district and regional level that are currently funded by the Massachusetts DOE. They provide assistance to new teachers and an extremely important opportunity for experienced teachers to share their knowledge with a new generation of teachers. This program appears to be well regarded across the state. Nationally, over 30% of new teachers leave the profession in the first three years of teaching. This is higher in disadvantaged districts. Also, 9% leave before completing the first year. This is tragic for the individual

and the children involved and extremely detrimental to efforts to improve educational quality.

## **DISCUSSION**

Research is clear and consistent in this field. New teachers who get support and mentoring, who are not left in the traditional culture of isolation within schools, do better and stay in education longer.

## **OPTIONS**

- Expand the current induction and mentoring grant programs offered by DOE to involve more school systems and more collaboration among school districts.
- Create a statewide network of Learning Centers sponsored by the state awarded through an RFP process to private/non profit organizations whose program of study would be approved by DOE for the preparation of teachers. Grant operating permission to these entities for 5 years and create a reporting, research, and renewal process for them.
- Create a position within each school district with responsibility to develop the district's strategies for induction of new teachers and to provide professional development for experienced teachers. Support such a position for two to three years to allow school systems to develop internal capacity for training, induction, and mentoring and for funding such a position.
- Recommend programs at the Master's level for initial certification that reflect an equal division between work in pedagogy and assessment and advanced work in the disciplines.

## **B. Program Review and Grant-making: The role of the Department of Education in encouraging best practice**

### **DATA/DISCUSSION**

The current role of the Department of Education involves all aspects of teacher preparation in Massachusetts from establishing regulations, implementing the testing program, granting program approval, designing and implementing numerous grant programs as incentives for improved practices, and collecting and reporting of data used for decision making. Given the preference of the task force for outcomes and incentives and the various options throughout this report, we would suggest the following changes in the department's responsibilities.

## **OPTIONS**

- Remove program approval from DOE and shift to third party contractors for program approval.
- Develop DOE role to emphasize support and technical training, (i.e., separate support from evaluation).
- Focus grant making on fewer projects and in particular emphasize grants to colleges and districts seeking to
  - Increase the involvement of liberal arts faculty in the preparation of teachers,
  - Build partnerships, and
  - Develop mentoring programs.

- Refine some aspects of program approval criteria to include data collected by the colleges, for example:
  - Provide evidence of admission standards and their use.
  - Provide evidence of collaboration with liberal arts faculty. (This might be a joint initiative with the Board of Higher Education program approval.)
  - Conduct exit interviews of students for purposes of program evaluation.
  - Conduct interviews of alumni after two years of teaching.
  - Survey principals who have hired graduates.
  - Consider a change in the composition of the group that signs off on initial candidates for certification.
- Serve as a broker with private institutions that wish to work with or contribute time, etc. to schools to connect them to the funded partnership efforts.

## **Summary**

The Joint Commission has asked difficult questions and we have tried to provide, a look at several important areas within the current system of teacher preparation. While we have not fully finished this work, we would like to draw your attention to a related concern. When we consider the preparation of teachers, we must also ask preparation for what? And part of “what” is the workspace (buildings, classrooms, public areas) and work life (assignments, reward systems, career options) of the profession. Excellence in preparation must be complemented by professional dignity. All of the discussions about how to change, even reform higher education and teacher preparation programs in particular, take place within a set of economic forces which sees young lawyers in Boston receiving starting salaries of \$85,000 and teachers receiving \$26,000. These are huge disparities and are reflected in the workspace and work life of both groups. Salaries and incentives were not the focus of this report; however, these topics do shape the context of the issues and ideas presented above.

There are many groups looking at how best to satisfy the need for exceptional teachers for all children in America: there is certainly a world of conflicting research and opinions about what ought to be done. We have tried to offer some principles and suggest ways to encourage a variety of creative solutions. Having said that, the topic is huge and the time for study was quite short. Hence many topics from collective bargaining issues to how to embed technology in the preparation programs have not been addressed. We acknowledge the limits of this work and still remain hopeful that it will be useful to the Joint Commission.

**Our sincere thank you to Peggy Wood, staff to the Joint Commission, for her guidance and encouragement and to the faculty and staff of the colleges and organizations with whom we met. Their wisdom and insight was often the ideal blend of theory and practice.**

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Individual faculty and staff

Boston Public Library	Northeastern University
Higher Education Resource Center	Tufts University
Boston University	UMASS/Amherst
Clark University	UMASS/Boston
Lesley College	Wheelock College
Massachusetts Board of Higher Education	
Massachusetts Department of Education	

## **APPENDIX B**

**Report to the Joint Commission on Educator Preparation  
from  
The Task Force on Assessment of Teacher Candidates  
January 20, 2000**

# JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION TASK FORCE ON TEACHER ASSESSMENT

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**Peggy Wood**  
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**Elizabeth Pauley**  
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**To: The Joint Commission on Educator Preparation  
From: Fred Tirrell, Chairman- Task Force on Teacher Assessment**

When I was graduate student my advisor told me that when you are doing your dissertation you are "looking for a little piece of truth." I hope you find some truth in this report. Your task is exceedingly difficult because the base of information is changing daily. In addition, you must weave what you have harvested from the other reports and the efforts of the Department of Education into your deliberations.

The report was hard to do because we were asked to present options rather than recommendations. We debated hard and long on many topics but always maintained an objective view. This is another way of saying that the report might be different if we included only those topics that we believed in passionately. To editorialize, I believe your first job is to decide philosophically what the role of the state should be in teacher licensure. How extensive should it be? What part should be the role of the state? What part would be best done locally?

In addition to our committee report there is an "Addendum Report" by committee member Dale Ballou. Dale had to come a long way to our meetings and could not make the last two sessions. Consequently, he was not part of the "rich stew" of discussion that was "spiced" by everyone's experience and beliefs. In my judgement, Dale's report adds good information for you. I believe that most of his points support our suggestions. Towards the end he writes about appeals processes, etc. in my view these things fall more into the categories of regulations rather than policy.

The Board of Education is blessed to have Peggy Wood. She is knowledgeable, accommodating, indefatigable, and invariably pleasant and courteous. If the truth were known – we probably work for her! Our research assistant, Elizabeth Pauley is a gem! Her work was superior. Her energy was boundless. She not only did the work we asked her to do; she did an amazing amount of research on her own.

The Task Force was exemplary. We met at the headquarters of the Mass. Elementary Principals' Association. Nadya Higgins is the Executive Director of this organization and a Task Force member. She brings the perspective of administration and staff development to our team. She made sure we had dinner every night we met there. Sue Freedman is President of Teachers<sup>21</sup> and a former staff member at D.O.E. She brought great experience in education generally staff development particularly to our work. Dale Ballou is an economist at UMASS- Amherst. He is an economist and brought his background in studying teacher licensure and the caution of a researcher. Jim Mead is the Director of Technology at Buckingham, Browne and Nichols School. Jim has done extensive research on educational issues in Michigan and Chicago. Marie Kenyon was a teacher consultant for us. She has a Ph.D. in physics and had a career change into teaching five years ago. She offered great feedback on our work. I would work with these people anytime.

We wish you great success with your efforts. We have reached the mythical millennium everyone has been talking about. Your work can make it as bright as everyone hopes it will be. We look forward to seeing you again.



## The Task Force on Teacher Assessment Report

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## Executive Summary

In a standards-based education system, assessments play a critical role. Teacher assessment can improve the quality of the teaching force by screening out inadequate candidates and by helping new teachers identify the strengths and weaknesses in their instructional practice. A state assessment program should help all teachers achieve excellence in practice. The Task Force recommends that before an assessment system is defined, adequate research and review of other states' efforts should be done to validate the option.

In October 1999, the Joint Commission on Educator Preparation in Massachusetts appointed a Special Task Force on Assessment of Teacher Candidates and charged the group with researching and developing a variety of assessment options that could be implemented at different stages in the state's licensure of teacher candidates.

Specifically, the Joint Commission asked the Task Force to:

1. Make an inventory of assessments of teacher candidates being used by the state and by preparation programs.
2. Consider additional assessment models, including:
  - Which additional skills or knowledge should be assessed?
  - What methods and instruments are available for assessing teacher candidates?
  - How might additional assessments be implemented?
  - Which stages and levels of certificates would be needed as decision points for new assessments?
3. Consider whether there are ways to link teacher candidate assessment to student learning outcomes, either in student teaching or in assessment leading to standard certification in an employment setting.

Over its six-week tenure, the Task Force addressed each part of the charge. The following is a brief overview of how the group dealt with each task.

### Task 1: Inventory of existing assessments

After reviewing state administered assessments (the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test), the Task Force surveyed a sample of state-approved teacher preparation programs (including the Massachusetts Bonus Signing Program). This inventory indicates that teacher education programs grant endorsement for certification only after candidates successfully complete a cumulative set of assessments, including traditional tests (in coursework) as well as performance-based assessments (student teaching classroom observations and portfolios). The inventory also reveals that programs are raising admissions standards and program requirements; thirty percent of respondents now require candidates to successfully complete the communication and literacy portions of the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test prior to program admission or student teaching.

### Task 2: Assessment Options

The Task Force considered a wide range of assessment options and methods for the Joint Commission to review and possibly recommend. The Task Force's options include:

- Research existing tests and assessments in Massachusetts and other states;
- Add to or modify existing tests to measure content-specific pedagogy (teaching knowledge);
- Institute performance-based assessments such as portfolios and classroom observations for initial and professional licenses.

The limited tenure of the Task Force allowed only superficial research and review; however, the options presented could be incorporated into a statewide systemic effort to increase teacher quality and student achievement. Additionally, the Task Force sought to present practical

options that are aligned with and would supplement existing state assessments and the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test (MECT).

Described briefly below are options relating to Task 2 of the Joint Commission's charge; each is explained in greater detail in the attached report. Many reflect initiatives already underway at the Department of Education. (See attached Chart, page X). This alignment was not intentional, however, it offers the Joint Commission an opportunity to endorse Department actions, or suggest alternate paths.

(Corresponding page numbers for the full report are listed in parentheses next to each option.)

*Charge: Which additional skills or knowledge should be assessed?*

**Option 1. Maintain current assessment system while researching and evaluating existing assessments in Massachusetts and other states. (p. 2)**

Like many states around the country, Massachusetts' teacher assessment program is too new to measure its impact on the teacher workforce. The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that for the time being the state stay the course with its assessment efforts, delaying consideration of new ones in favor of waiting for the results of the independent evaluation of the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test and other states' initiatives. This will help to ensure that tax dollars used for assessment are allocated toward systems which have conducted appropriate analysis and consideration of best practice.

**Option 2. Add to or modify existing tests to measure content-specific pedagogy (teaching knowledge). (p. 2)**

The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the state require an assessment of content-specific pedagogy for candidates earning initial certification.

The clear preference of the Task Force would be for the state to either modify the existing MECT or measure content-specific pedagogy as part of a performance-based assessment. The Task Force is reluctant to recommend adding a new, stand alone test of pedagogy.

*Charge: What methods and instruments are available for assessing teacher candidates? How might additional assessments be implemented? Which stages and levels of certificates would be needed as decision points for new assessments?*

**Option 3. Institute performance-based assessments such as portfolios and classroom observations. (p. 3)**

**Option 3a.** Institute a portfolio-based performance assessment, with a classroom performance video component for the professional license. Delay implementation until the evaluation results of other states' performance assessment efforts are made available. (p. 4)

**Option 3b.** Require performance-based assessments — such as ongoing classroom observations and teaching portfolios — as part of initial licensure for teacher candidates who have not completed an assessed, full-length student teaching in their teacher preparation program. (p. 5)

**Option 3c.** Develop guidelines and rubrics for state-approved observation-based assessments to be administered by approved teacher-preparation programs. Offer state training to supervising teachers and program supervisors on how to administer assessments according to these standards. (p. 6)

**Option 3d.** Set performance standards for new teachers and provide resources to support all new teachers' induction. Concurrently, recommend that the state link an assessment to induction that could be administered locally. (p. 7)

**Option 3e.** Establish a system for experienced teachers to assess skills of teachers moving from the initial license to professional. (p. 8)

**Option 3f.** Institute a blended program of assessment and mentoring for beginning teachers. Teachers seeking professional certification would be assessed with multiple assessments in their second year by a local, state trained peer review panel. (p. 9)

### **Task 3: Linking teacher assessment to student learning**

*Initially, the Task Force chose not to address this issue; there was consensus among the group that linking student achievement to teacher assessment and/or licensure would not increase student achievement. At the Joint Commission's request, the Chair of the Task Force and Department of Education staff researched and developed an overview of this issue. The following represents that work and has been reviewed by the larger Task Force.*

A growing body of research confirms the common sense notion that good teaching matters. Research conducted by Professor William L. Sanders of the University of Tennessee demonstrates that students can have vastly different achievement levels as a result of the quality of teachers they are assigned. For this reason, states and districts in Texas, Tennessee and Colorado have begun to link student achievement (on written tests) to teacher evaluation. This issue is not without controversy. Supporters suggest that such a policy will improve practice and introduce needed accountability into the public school system. Critics contend that tying student test scores to teacher pay, promotion or licensure can have perverse and significant consequences on teacher behavior and student learning. Additionally, critics point out that to achieve maximum reliability, such a policy would require Massachusetts to administer the MCAS to students in all grades and subjects twice a year.

## **TASK 1: Inventory of Assessments Employed by a Sample of Approved Teacher Preparation Programs around the state**

*For a full copy of the inventory, please refer to Appendix B.*

### **SUMMARY OF STATE ASSESSMENTS:**

- The Massachusetts Educator Certification Test

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act mandated state teacher tests; all candidates for initial licensure in Massachusetts are required to take tests of communication and literacy skills and subject matter knowledge. The tests are aligned to state certification regulations and curriculum frameworks; they are “criterion-referenced” (measuring candidates’ knowledge and skills in relation to a standard rather than to the scores of other candidates.) For more information about the teacher test, please visit [www.doe.mass.edu/teachertest](http://www.doe.mass.edu/teachertest).

The state also administers a portfolio assessment to the participants of the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program at the end of their first semester of teaching.

### **SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENTS USED BY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS:**

- A combination of traditional and performance-based assessments used in coursework and in student teaching.

To identify the assessments which teacher preparation programs require before granting program endorsement for certification, the Task Force surveyed seventeen state-approved preparation programs.<sup>1</sup> Participants were asked to describe program requirements and assessments. Findings include:

- ◆ **Approved programs employ a variety of assessments, combining traditional tests in course work with performance-based assessments while student teaching (such as classroom observations and portfolios.)**
- ◆ **Programs are increasingly using portfolio assessments.** Over ninety-five percent of respondents require a program portfolio (in addition to classroom observation by faculty or university supervisors.)
- ◆ **Programs are undergoing major transitions in response to the MECT;** many are raising academic standards (GPA requirements) and many require (or are considering requiring) successful completion of a test prior to program admission. Thirty percent of surveyed programs require the communication and literacy skills portion of the MECT; an additional 12 percent require another standardized test.
- ◆ **Approved programs rely on the Department of Education’s Principles of Effective Teaching and the Common Teaching Competencies.** Seventy-six percent of survey respondents have developed, or are developing, an assessment rubric for student teaching based on the Principles and the Competencies. Such rubrics generally provide structure and rigor to the classroom observation.

## **TASK 2: Additional assessment options**

State assessments at each level of licensure should form a streamlined continuum that relies on authentic assessments as useful tools for improving instruction at all levels. Assessment systems can help new teachers to identify their instructional strengths and weaknesses. Through participation as mentors and scorers, veteran teachers also strengthen their

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<sup>1</sup> Participating institutions of higher education include: Assumption, Boston College, Clark, Eastern Nazarene, Elms, Fitchburg State, Harvard, Lesley, Mount Holyoke, Northeastern, Salem State, Simmons, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Westfield State, Western New England College. Department of Education staff was interviewed for information on the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers.

instructional skills. Creating this continuum will require a sustained commitment of funding, training, personnel and expertise.

Below please find options for assessment of teacher candidates developed by the Task Force over its six-week tenure. These are based on the perspectives and expertise of task force members, limited research from state-approved teacher preparation programs and limited research of other states' efforts. While not exhaustive, the list of options reflects a wide range of policy alternatives; many reflect current work at the Massachusetts Department of Education. Research on these options is divided; additional study will be needed to determine which of these would most improve instructional practice.

In developing these options, the Task Force asked itself the following questions:

- Could proposed assessments be modified and adopted as part of a systemic effort to increase teacher quality and student achievement?
- Would this option be practical? Given the state of education reform in Massachusetts and across the country, could this option be brought to scale equitably and universally?
- Is the option aligned with education reform in Massachusetts and the Department of Education's proposed Professional Standards for Teachers? <sup>2</sup>
- Could the proposed option supplement existing state assessments and the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test?

**Charge: Which additional skills or knowledge should be assessed?**

**Option 1. Maintain the current assessment system while researching and evaluating existing assessments in Massachusetts and other states.**

Many states (including Massachusetts) have nascent testing systems that are too new to measure their impact on the teacher workforce. The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that for the time being the state stay the course with its assessment efforts, delaying consideration of new ones in favor of waiting for the results of the independent evaluation of the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test and other states' initiatives.

The Task Force does not endorse endless research efforts that are self-perpetuating and fruitless. Given the high stakes tied to assessment, however, the Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the Department of Education allocate enough staff time and resources to keep current with research on the assessment of teachers and teacher candidates.

**Option 2. Add to or modify existing tests to measure content-specific pedagogy (teaching knowledge).**

**→ Data**

- Connecticut is the only state that assesses teachers based on standards for subject-specific teaching.
- The two major testing companies- National Evaluation Systems (NES) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) publish and administer tests of professional knowledge.
- ETS' exam is called Principles of Learning & Teaching; it covers general topics ranging from practical classroom management situations to theories of teaching and learning.
- There are currently no tests of content-specific pedagogy that link successful completion with instructional success.

**\* Discussion**

The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the state require an assessment of content-specific pedagogy for candidates earning initial certification.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Department of Education's concept paper for revised *Regulations for the Certification of Education Personnel in Massachusetts*.

The clear preference of the Task Force would be that the state decline to add a new test of pedagogy but either modify the existing MECT or measure content-specific pedagogy through a performance-based assessment.

Subject knowledge and basic academic skills together will not result in effective teaching unless accompanied by pedagogical skills. Effective teachers combine their knowledge of content area with pedagogy — expertise on how to teach. The physics teacher who is well-versed in physics but who does not understand the pedagogy behind teaching her subject will surely be as ineffective as one with a lesser grasp of the subject.

#### **\* Summary**

Assessing content-specific pedagogy can help to ensure teachers are well versed in their subject and can impart that information through a variety of teaching skills. Rather than add another test to the MECT assessment program, the Task Force suggests that the Joint Commission either recommend modifying the existing subject area test to contain content-specific pedagogy or recommend creating another less-traditional assessment that measures pedagogy.

#### **\* Additional Considerations**

Scholars are skeptical about the predictive value of paper-and-pencil tests of content-specific pedagogy. In light of this, the Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the DOE conduct an analysis of existing tests of content-specific pedagogy and work with the MECT designers to modify existing tests in a way that would enhance the test and begin to evaluate more of the skills required for effective teaching.

*Charge: What methods and instruments are available for assessing teacher candidates? How might additional assessments be implemented? Which stages and levels of certificates would be needed as decision points for new assessments?*

**Option 3. Develop performance-based assessments such as portfolios or classroom observations.**

Around the country states and districts are attempting to evaluate instructional practice by directly measuring classroom performance. Often this kind of assessment (performance-based) entails either a teacher portfolio or a classroom observation; both can be administered by officials at the state or local level.

Proponents of such assessments assert that performance-based assessments offer an enhanced view into instructional practice while highlighting the intangible personal qualities of good teaching. A state-administered performance-based assessment would lend itself to consistent application of the standards across programs.

Critics, however, contend that measures of practice can be “faked” (a teacher can control the information included in a portfolio, structuring it to the assessed standards; teachers can prepare special lessons for the day observers visit the classroom.) Critics also hold that a state-administered program would be logistically burdensome.

Local administration of such a system might offer a compromise between the two camps. It is true that local systems might be influenced by subjective factors, including reluctance by a local administrator to offend a staff member or to undertake the search for a replacement. A locally administered assessment, however, would avoid the significant logistical burdens of a state administered system while providing teachers with valuable feedback and could be integrated with other information (such as student performance, parental satisfaction, instructional growth over time). State training for assessors could help to ensure consistent application of the standards.

Options within the broad category of performance-based assessment systems include:

**Option 3a. Develop a portfolio-based performance assessment, with a classroom performance video component for the professional license. Delay implementation until the evaluation results of other states' performance assessment efforts are made available.**

→**Data**

- Typically, portfolios are based on clear standards, are assessed using a scoring rubric and consist of:
  1. lesson plans, including goals for specific students;
  2. examples of the work of these students, with teacher commentary and ideas for further lessons; and,
  3. videotapes of the teacher interacting with students in the classroom.
- Connecticut, Indiana and North Carolina are implementing portfolio assessments.
- The centerpiece of Connecticut's assessment system is the portfolio. Teachers who have received special training score portfolios; a team of scorers reads and evaluates all portions of the portfolio.
- Connecticut projects an annual expenditure of \$3,600,000 for the portfolio assessment and support program (covering teachers in their first and second years). That translates into \$692 per trainee per year.
- The Council of Chief State School Officers, through its Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) project, is developing a portfolio assessment to be used in licensure. The Massachusetts DOE is a member of INTASC, attending development meetings and staying informed of project progress.
- The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has developed standards for the advanced certification of highly skilled veteran teachers. Candidates can earn certification through a standards-based two-part assessment process that includes assessment exercises and a portfolio. Scoring is done by trained teachers.
- The Massachusetts Department of Education encourages candidates to participate in the NBPTS process; for qualified teachers the Department subsidizes up to seventy-five percent of the \$2000 NBPTS fee. The DOE also offers support groups to NBPTS candidates.
- In Massachusetts, NBPTS-certified teachers who mentor apprentice teachers are eligible for a \$5,000 bonus each year for up to 10 years. Twenty-two teachers in Massachusetts have achieved National Board Certification.

**\* Discussion**

A portfolio is the teacher's way of demonstrating good teaching practice, lesson and curriculum planning, responses to students, reflection upon practice and personal qualities of effective teaching. Portfolios also provide teachers valuable professional development based on reflection of practice and feedback from scorers. Common sense suggests that teachers who have engaged in such intensive professional development and assessment would improve their instructional craft, there are no studies tying NBPTS certification to improved student achievement. Nor is state data currently available on the impact of these assessments on the quality of the teaching force.

However, initial indicators suggest that there is benefit to a portfolio assessment system, particularly one that includes videos of classroom performance. Indeed Connecticut is phasing out its classroom observation assessment system in favor of a portfolio system for the following reasons:

- **Portfolios can be content specific:** Classroom observation systems tend to be generic tools which provide superficial evaluation of content knowledge and teaching skill. Portfolios provide evidence of ability to plan curriculum and respond to student work in the content area.

- **Quality control:** Portfolios can be reviewed by teams of scorers; evidence can be examined several times to provide a high degree of accuracy.
- **Administration:** Portfolios can be submitted to a single location and scored at times that do not interfere with the teaching day. Scorers with appropriate content knowledge can be assembled on such a schedule more easily than they can be for classroom observations.

Because considerable training and expense is required by this assessment model the Joint Commission may wish to delay consideration of implementation in favor of waiting for data on the costs and benefits of programs around the country.

#### **\*Summary**

The success of other state efforts may prompt Massachusetts' to modify its existing assessment methods. The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that after reviewing data from other states, the state consider ways in which new assessments could be implemented in a comprehensive and equitable way.

#### **\*Additional considerations**

With sufficient coaching, new teachers may learn to manipulate the content so as to appear to meet or exceed the standard without actually doing so.

In addition, data from other states on the impact of portfolios on the teaching force may not be available for a year or more. Conditions under which performance-based assessment programs succeed or fail in other states might not be applicable in Massachusetts.

**Option 3b. Develop a performance-based assessment — either a classroom observation or a teaching portfolio — as part of initial licensure for teacher candidates who have not completed an assessed, full-length student teaching in a teacher preparation program. This assessment could be administered by state officials or building-level personnel.**

#### **→Data**

- Alternative route programs- such as Teach For America (TFA) and the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program- train college graduates without prior educator preparation to be teachers.
- Three-quarters of principals responding to a 1997 survey rated TFA instructors superior to other beginning teachers. Almost two-thirds rated them above average in comparison to all faculty.<sup>3</sup>
- Massachusetts sponsors the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for new teachers (MSBP); currently 58 teachers have entered the classroom through this route.
- Bonus recipients are trained in a summer program called the Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT.)
- In coming years, MINT training will be extended to up to 500 candidates (with and without bonuses).
- MINT training costs approximately \$450 per candidate.<sup>4</sup>
- Massachusetts has district-based certification programs either operating or under development in 7 school districts and 2 collaboratives.

#### **\*Discussion**

Alternate routes to teaching attract individuals to the profession who might not have entered the classroom otherwise; often these individuals bring with them valuable life experiences and

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<sup>3</sup> Kane, Parsons and Associates. (1997). *A Survey of Principals, Parents and Students In School Districts with Teach for America Corps Members* New York, New York.

<sup>4</sup> This figure does not include administrative costs such as mailing fees, personnel costs and overhead. Nor does it include the actual \$20,000 bonus award. It does include all other costs, including recruitment and advertising.

subject knowledge. Like all new teachers, however, these individuals must receive adequate training and support; all new teachers should be held to the same high standards. When a student graduates from a teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education, he or she has completed a pre-practicum (classroom observation period) and student teaching. When individuals participate in alternative programs, such as the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for new teachers (MSBP) and district-based certification programs, their student teaching experience may have been more limited than individuals from traditional programs. Consequently, the state requires them to have intensive mentoring and, in the case of the MSBP, to complete a comprehensive portfolio process. The MBSP portfolio process might be extended to participants in district-based programs, or a new observation assessment could be developed especially for candidates from alternate routes. (For more information on the MSBP, please see Appendix A.)

#### **\*Summary**

Candidates from other alternative programs should have access to similar support and training. The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that when they enter the classroom individuals from alternative programs be required to demonstrate the same skills and knowledge that are required of individuals in traditional programs. This performance assessment may be in place of student teaching, or to supplement an abbreviated student teaching experience.

**Option 3c. Develop guidelines and rubrics for state-approved observation-based assessment to be administered by approved teacher preparation programs. Offer state training to supervising teachers and program supervisors on how to administer assessments according to these standards.**

#### **➔Data**

- State-approved teacher preparation programs are required by the certification regulations to observe student teaching at least three times. Over half of supervisors in programs surveyed by the Task Force observe their students more than the required three times.
- Most teacher preparation programs rely on the Massachusetts Department of Education's Principles of Effective Teaching and the Common Teaching Competencies as the basis for student teacher observations.
- Seventy-six percent of programs surveyed by the Task Force have developed scoring rubrics based on these standards.

#### **\*Discussion**

Classroom observations by trained assessors can provide teachers and districts with a tool for evaluation and growth. Rather than providing a one-time "snapshot" of performance (as a paper-and-pencil test does), a series of observation-based performance assessments provides a more complete picture of teacher performance over time. In addition to being evaluative, this kind of assessment can help new teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their craft.

In its observation-based performance assessment system, Connecticut found it difficult and costly to make use of practicing teachers and administrators for on-site observations. Logistical burdens (including cost concerns and other factors) led to the phasing out of the program in favor of a content-specific portfolio process.

#### **\*Summary**

Because of Connecticut's difficulties in instituting a state-run observation process, and because candidates in approved teacher preparation programs are observed at least three times, the Joint Commission may wish to recommend that, rather than create a state system of observations, the state develop guidelines and rubrics for implementing and scoring observation-based assessments locally. The Joint Commission may also wish to recommend to the Department of Education that it provide training for those administering classroom-based assessments.

### \*Additional considerations

Developing a cadre of state-trained local assessors is a major undertaking. The Joint Commission should also consider sources of funding for this option; some current state funds designated for professional development could be allocated to these trainings. Alternately, the state may wish to consider charging approved-programs for the training.

**Option 3d. Set performance standards for new teachers and provide resources to support all new teachers' induction. Concurrently, recommend that the state link an assessment to induction that principals could administer.**

#### →Data

- More than 20 percent of public school teachers leave their positions within three years. *Source: Recruiting New Teachers (RNT). Learning the Ropes.* (Belmont, MA: date).
- 9.3 percent of teachers leave within their first year.
- Teachers in high schools, urban areas and schools with large numbers of minority and lower income students have higher rates of attrition.
- An RNT national survey suggests that induction programs help reduce new teacher turnover; the median attrition rate for inductees in 89 responding programs was 7 percent (comparing favorably with national attrition rates.)
- Almost thirty states require or provide funds for beginning teacher induction or mentoring programs of some kind; a handful (including Connecticut) have specifically allocated funds for these programs. Other states have built flexibility into their staff development funding to include training mentor and funding induction.
- Only nineteen states mandate that districts offer the programs to all beginning teachers.
- Many studies have found that teachers who are mentored as part of their induction period focus on student learning much sooner; they become more effective as teachers because they learn from guided practice rather than trial and error.
- Half of Massachusetts' districts currently provide some form of beginning teacher support. Representatives from fifty of those districts attended the state's most recent mentor training institute.

#### \*Discussion

Across the country, states and districts are creating and adopting induction and mentoring programs with linked assessments, such as the ETS Pathwise program and Praxis III assessment. Pathwise uses classroom observation as a professional development/assessment system for student- and beginning-teachers. It is built on a framework of essential teaching criteria and is designed to be used in non-licensing situations.

The 19 essential teaching criteria in which Pathwise is grounded are based on significant research and the consensus of hundreds of practicing educators from across the country. These essential criteria can be divided into four domains:

- Organizing content knowledge for student learning
- Creating an environment for student learning
- Teaching for student learning
- Teacher professionalism

The companion assessment for this system is Praxis III, which evaluates all aspects of a beginning teacher's classroom performance. Unlike Pathwise, Praxis III is designed to assist with licensure decisions; trained local assessors conduct these comprehensive assessments in the classroom using a set of consistent, reliable, nationally validated criteria.

Anecdotal evidence from Ohio, one state that has recently adopted Pathwise as an induction model, confirms data from national surveys which suggest the importance of induction

programs in improving instructional practice and teacher satisfaction. Ohio's efforts are too new to measure the impact on the teacher workforce.

In Massachusetts one existing model is the Revere Public Schools where 100 percent of new teachers are paired with trained, paid local mentors in the same grade or field. The program also provides struggling second and third year teachers with assistance. Mentor pairs participate in a three-day workshop prior to the first day of school, observe each other and conference regularly. Participants in the program overwhelmingly reported that it was responsible for improving their teaching.

Funding for this program originated from Goals 2000 funds and now is part of the standard district budget.

The Department of Education's concept paper for the Revised Certification Regulations requires local districts to establish induction and mentoring programs.

#### **\*Summary**

Local districts like Revere are best able to support new teachers; the Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the state create or adopt performance standards and require local districts to link assessments to local induction programs. After developing the guidelines, the state's role would be to work with local administrators and teachers to build local capacity for administering these programs, to enforce the regulations and to support districts with personnel, expertise and resources.

#### **\*Additional considerations**

Mentoring programs can require additional negotiations with teachers' unions. Such programs can also require supplemental funding. The Joint Commission should urge the Massachusetts DOE to consider and review local districts' allocations of professional development funds. Many districts' allocations for professional development and induction are far below the levels mandated by the state.

#### **Option 3e. Establish a system for experienced teachers to assess skills of teachers moving from the initial license to professional.**

##### **→Data**

- Districts around the country are finding that using experienced teacher as assessors provides valuable professional growth opportunities to all involved.

#### **\*Discussion**

Like every profession, teacher performance and continued growth depends upon high quality professional development. Mentor and peer-review programs provide opportunity for teacher leadership and growth by engaging experienced teachers in the improvement and assessment of newer teachers' craft. Teacher assisted professional development and assessment enables new teachers in Toledo, Ohio and numerous other districts to improve their instructional technique while veteran teachers become more reflective about their practice.

All teachers newly hired by Toledo Public Schools are reviewed by an Intern Board through the Toledo Peer Assistance and Review program. Those designated as interns are assigned a consulting or mentor teacher for the purpose of professional development and evaluation. The consulting teacher conducts an evaluation of the intern's progress and success toward meeting the performance standards of the Toledo Public Schools.

According to the American Federation of Teachers, the evaluation process is one of continuous mutual goal-setting using classroom observations and follow-up conferences where the intern and consulting teacher analyze and set practical goals for improvement. A consulting teacher may use any number of methods to assist the intern in meeting the goals, including demonstration lessons, video taping and observations of other teachers.

Evaluations are based primarily on the intern's progress toward meeting specific goals (as measured by the consulting teacher).

#### **\*Summary**

The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the state create standards for such a system and provide resources of expertise and funding to support district efforts to develop peer-review and mentoring programs. The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the state focus on building capacity at the local level for administering such an assessment.

#### **\*Additional considerations**

The Joint Commission should be mindful of districts' capacity for creating such programs. Many peer assistance and review programs pair new and struggling teachers with mentors in their field. Districts may not be able to accommodate such a match. Additionally, strong mentor programs train mentors; if the state mandates mentor programs it will need to provide funding for local training or provide statewide trainings.

**Option 3f. Institute a blended program of assessment and mentoring for beginning teachers. Teachers seeking professional certification would be assessed with multiple assessments in their second year by a local, state trained peer review panel. This procedure would be separate from local employment procedures. The State would be responsible for providing appropriate standards, reasonable guidelines and sufficient resources, including training.**

#### **→Data**

- North Carolina has a similar (though not identical) system which demands a substantial financial commitment.
- Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma and South Carolina require that novice teachers be evaluated by a team that includes the principal and evaluators from outside the school.

#### **\*Discussion**

After completing a yearlong local induction/mentoring program teachers seeking professional certification would participate in a performance assessment which would be evaluated (in their second year) by a panel of state trained, local, experienced educators including teachers and administrators. If the panel does not recommend the candidate for initial licensure, the state would become involved in mentoring and assessment for year three.

Adequate funding for this kind of program would require a commitment from the state; funds could be provided through existing professional development funds.

One state with a similar program, administered through its counties, is North Carolina. In year 1, the initial licensed teacher is assigned a paid, trained mentor and participates in an induction period, which includes orientation, an Individual Growth Plan and at least four observations. In year 2, the mentor relationship continues and the teacher develops her assessment product: a combination of portfolio and growth plan that builds on work begun in teacher preparation programs. A district Professional Review Team evaluates the product and makes a licensure recommendation. This team consists of local educators who are viewed as experts in their field; they are selected through a nomination process, trained and certified.

If a teacher does not obtain a passing score on this assessment, in year 3 teachers have the chance to participate in the assessment and have their portfolio reviewed again.

It is important to note that North Carolina indicated that their program has demanded a substantial financial commitment.

#### **\*Summary**

The Joint Commission may wish to recommend that the DOE begin to research and develop regulations for instituting this kind of program.

## **COMPANION ISSUES FOR THE JOINT COMMISSION TO CONSIDER:**

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Assessment is one piece of a larger spectrum of teacher quality and school reform; alone it will not improve the quality of the state's teachers. Assessment will not overcome shortcomings in teacher recruitment and retention nor will they compensate for poor induction periods and disjointed professional development opportunities. The following considerations are issues that relate to assessment, and should be, in the opinion of the Task Force, considered as part of assessment.

- Shared Accountability for improved student learning.**

As Massachusetts advances its reform efforts, students, teachers, schools and school districts are being held accountable for student achievement. Applicants to programs who will be held to high standards should demand the same from their preparation programs.

Publicizing program information from approved teacher-preparation programs would allow candidates to make informed application decisions.

The state should also remember to hold itself accountable for maintaining its commitment to reform models/assessments and for expanding the capacity of local systems engaged in successfully raising student achievement. This demands sustained allocations of funding, personnel and support for districts and individuals.

- Economic and workforce issues.**

Massachusetts public schools are committed to hiring outstanding individuals to teach. In the next 10 years, however, fifty percent of the teaching force in this country will retire and student enrollments will rise, leaving many school districts with teacher shortages in key subject areas. State assessment systems should not deter talented individuals from entering the profession.

Massachusetts may wish to consider ways to allow districts to hire a wide range of individuals.

- Alternative Routes to Teaching**

No teacher preparation program is perfect; each program and path has its own strengths and weaknesses. Massachusetts should continue to recognize multiple paths and routes to teaching.

Currently, Massachusetts offers a signing bonus to attract individuals to education who may not have considered the teaching profession; Massachusetts is the only state to offer signing bonuses. The state may wish to consider collecting baseline data on the bonus-signing teachers on job satisfaction, retention, evaluation, etc. to inform future policy decisions relating to alternative routes to teaching.

Massachusetts may also wish to expand the alternative certification route and may wish to review New Jersey's and other states' alternative certification programs.

- State and local roles**

The Massachusetts' public school system has been undergoing significant changes since the passage of the 1993 education reform act. Now more than ever local administrators and teachers are being asked to take on new responsibilities and are held accountable for the results of their efforts. The state should be aware of new requirements and responsibilities for players in the system. The state may wish to focus its efforts on capacity building in local districts and ensuring that local administrators and teachers receive sufficient support to fulfill their duties.

- Existing Efforts and Requirements.**

Before the state alters or adds to its assessment program, it may wish to consider current DOE efforts; consideration of existing assessment mechanisms will result in a more cohesive system and may conserve scarce resources of funding and personnel.

### Task Three: Institute performance-based assessments such as portfolios or classroom observations.

Option	Current Department of Education Initiatives
<p><b>1. Maintain current assessment system while researching and evaluating existing assessments in Massachusetts and other states.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend that for the time being the state maintain its assessment efforts</li> <li>• Make no changes to the set of assessments now required and</li> <li>• Retain the ways candidates move through the licensing process.</li> <li>• Contract with an independent evaluator to assess the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test.</li> </ul>	An independent technical advisory committee to the MECT is being formed.
<p><b>2. Add to or modify existing tests to measure content-specific pedagogy (teaching knowledge).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require an assessment of content-specific pedagogy for candidates earning initial certification.</li> </ul>	Currently, there is no initiative at the Dept. that addresses this option.
<p><b>3. Institute performance-based assessments such as portfolios and classroom observations.</b> Options include:</p>	
<p>3a. Develop a portfolio-based performance assessment, with a classroom performance video component for the professional license. Delay implementation until the evaluation results of other states' performance assessment efforts are made available.</p>	The Massachusetts Dept. of Education is a member of a national consortium that is developing and piloting a portfolio assessment that includes a classroom performance video.
<p>3b. Require performance-based assessments — such as ongoing classroom observations and teaching portfolios — as part of initial licensure for teacher candidates who have not completed an assessed, full-length student teaching in their teacher preparation program.</p>	Massachusetts sponsors the Bonus Signing Program which trains individuals with no prior educator certification. These candidates are assessed through a portfolio assessment in their first year of teaching. This program also requires participants to have local mentors.
<p>3c. Develop guidelines and rubrics for state-approved observation-based assessment to be used by preparation programs for candidates seeking initial licensure. Offer state training to supervising teachers and program supervisors on how to administer assessments according to these</p>	As part of its Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant, the Massachusetts Dept. of Ed. is planning to develop, pilot and implement diagnostic performance assessments for pre-service teacher preparation programs.

standards.	
3d. Set performance standards for new teachers and provide resources to support all new teachers' induction. Concurrently, recommend that the state develop an assessment linked to induction.	<b>The concept paper for the revised Regulations for Certification of Education Personnel outlines performance standards for teachers and standards for induction programs &amp; mentoring programs.</b>
3e. Establish a system for experienced teachers to assess skills of teachers moving from the initial license to professional.	<b>The concept paper for the revised Regulations for Certification of Education Personnel outlines professional standards for mentor teachers. There are no provisions made for veteran teachers as assessors of beginning teachers.</b>  <b>Nationally, and in states developing portfolio assessments, experienced teachers are trained to score portfolios.</b>
3f. Institute a blended program of assessment and mentoring for beginning teachers. Teachers seeking professional certification would be assessed with multiple assessments in their second year by a local, state trained peer review panel.	<b>The draft concept paper for the revised cert. regs. proposes a new performance-based assessment to be administered by districts for the professional license.</b>

### **Task Three: Linking student achievement to teacher evaluation for candidates for professional licensure**

Good teaching matters: the quality of instruction has been shown to have great impact on student test scores<sup>5</sup>. For this reason, some states and districts engaged in raising standards are focusing reform efforts on the bottom line (student achievement), integrating it into teacher evaluation. Several states (including Tennessee, Texas and Florida) consider student scores as part of teacher evaluation; no state presently links student achievement to teacher licensure.

At the request of the Joint Commission, the Task Force reviewed and researched this issue and found divided scholarship. A growing body of work suggests that tests are imperfect measures of actual knowledge, that student scores on achievement tests are unreliable measures of teacher competence, and that use of scores to hold teacher accountable leads to perverse behaviors that have negative consequences for student learning. A separate school of thought contends that linking student achievement to teacher evaluation is the only way to infuse accountability into a failing system. Below, please find a summary of each argument, supported by examples and anecdotes from other states.

The following report was researched and written by the Task Force Chair and Department of Education staff members at the request of the Joint Commission. Year-end schedule conflicts prevented the full Task Force from meeting to discuss and develop Task III. Committee members reviewed this section of the report and provided feedback.

#### **→Data:**

- Four states look at how much students are learning when they evaluate or re-license teachers. Source: Fordham Foundation, *The Quest for Better Teachers*, November 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Research done by William L. Sanders and Erik Hanushek confirm this.

- Twelve states have variable pay structures for teachers based on performance (merit pay) or marketplace conditions (differential pay). *Source: Fordham Foundation, 1999.*
- Research conducted by William L. Sanders of the University of Tennessee revealed that students have vastly different achievement levels as a result of the quality of teachers they are assigned.

**\*Discussion:**

Some of the arguments made by those who oppose the use of student test scores in evaluating teachers include the following.<sup>6</sup>

- **Tests are unreliable measures of student achievement.**
  - Tests only sample curriculum. Variance in scores may reflect differences in curriculum taught as much as student knowledge and skill.
  - Tests often over-sample easy to test topics, including number facts, spelling, etc. and under-sample important aspects of learning that are more difficult to test, including understanding of concepts, problem solving, etc.
  - Differences in timing of tests, rates of inclusion for special needs students, and other variables in test administration corrupt comparisons among groups of students and jurisdictions.
- **Teacher quality is not the most important factor determining student achievement.**
  - Socioeconomic status is the most important factor in predicting student achievement, and this is very difficult to control for accurately in routine, comprehensive testing programs
  - Within a school, two teachers may be assigned classes of students at very different levels of instructional readiness.
- **One teacher's class is too small a sample to permit accurate generalization about instructional competence.**
- **Use of high-stakes testing for teacher accountability leads to perverse behaviors by teachers such as:**
  - Transferring time and resources from untested material to tested material.
  - Devoting excessive time to drilling students on test-taking skills such as how to fill out "bubble sheets" and guess correct multiple-choice answers
  - Outright cheating, including prompting students during the administration of the test and altering student answers. Widespread cheating has been recently reported in the New York City Public Schools and Texas has seen test tampering cases in Austin, Houston and Dallas. Studies in Kentucky and Maryland also report that teachers have observed other teachers inappropriately coaching students during test administration.

In short, argue the opponents, teacher evaluation based on student testing creates incentives to raise scores, not necessarily to improve achievement. Opponents cite two phenomena as evidence:

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<sup>6</sup> For a more comprehensive and scholarly review of this issue, please consult *Foggy Lenses: Limitations in the Use of Achievement Tests as Measures of Educators' Productivity*, a forthcoming paper by Professor Daniel Koretz.

1. **Gains in state high-stakes tests such as those administered in Texas and Kentucky do not “generalize” to other, national tests such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the ACT and SAT.** (There is actually a mixed record in Texas where the math gains on the Texas tests were also seen on the NAEP, but scores in other subject areas did not improve on the NAEP.)
2. **Scores on new tests tend to rise rapidly in the first two years, then level off.** Studies following up on this pattern have been seen to indicate that the gains on state tests reflect increased familiarity with the test and not real gains in achievement.

In Massachusetts the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment of Skills (MCAS) would be the measure unless an entirely separate set of tests were developed. MCAS tests students in core subjects in the fourth, eighth and tenth grades. To use student scores for licensing of individual teachers, MCAS would need to be administered annually in core subjects and fall-spring testing would be required to demonstrate student growth. Further, tests would have to be developed in other subject areas to avoid discriminatory behavior (by withholding certification for a math teacher without assessing an art teacher for certification.)

### **Lessons from Other States**

#### **Tennessee:**

On the other hand, new forms of testing and statistical analysis, most notably that of Professor William Sanders at the University of Tennessee, claim to overcome the problems noted above and to construct a reliable measure of teacher effectiveness based on student test scores. Called the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS), the system devised by Professor Sanders was adopted as part of the Tennessee Educational Improvement Act in 1992.

Since then Tennessee has measured the “value added” of individual teachers. Based on Professor Sanders’ research, the state collects and disaggregates data on individual teachers’ classes over a period of three years. Teachers receive confidential “Teacher Reports” that allow them to see at what level their students were in the beginning of the year and at what level they were at the end of the year. These reports also illuminate in which subjects and standards students struggle or excel.

Principals also receive a copy of each teacher’s Teacher Report but are not allowed to formally use that information in teacher evaluation. It is used primarily for professional development purposes; in no way is it connected to licensure or employment decisions.

Each year the state releases the most recent three-year-average gains made by each school and district on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) to the public.

Features of the Tennessee program include:

- Testing of every student in grades 2-8 in every subject every year;
- Using student gains rather than absolute scores for accountability, so as to overcome the problem of socioeconomic advantage and special needs inclusion;
- Averaging data over three-year periods for accountability purposes;
- Use of individual teacher data by school officials and teachers for diagnostic purposes only;
- A mixed-model methodology that is analytically elaborate and collects and uses an unusually large amount of data on students, schools and teachers;
- Intervention by the state in districts that persistently fail to meet expectations; and,
- A belief, supported by studies of two Tennessee school districts, that the quality of teachers is a powerful determinant of student achievement.

Initial data analysis suggests that there is overall improvement in student achievement across the state since instituting the Teacher Reports.

Brief overviews of other states' efforts are attached in Appendix C.

### **Summary:**

The only place in the Massachusetts licensure scheme where such a linkage could be made between student test scores and teacher evaluation is in the decision to award the professional license, which is earned within the first three years of employment as a teacher.

Unless conditions similar to those in the Tennessee system could be met in Massachusetts, such a system would not be reliable and would result in inaccurate decisions about licensure. Meeting those conditions would present formidable obstacles:

- **Testing every student in every subject in every grade in every year.** This would be necessary to cover all beginning teachers and to guarantee that there would be "before" test scores for the students in any new teacher's class.
- **Using three-year averages for individual teachers.** Since scores are not usually available in the early spring when many contract decisions are being made, Massachusetts would need to extend its professional status period and the duration of its initial license to allow time for test scores over three years to be accumulated for initially certified teachers.
- **Perverse incentives.** If the MCAS were the test used, its comprehensive nature would overcome the narrow sampling problem referred to in the discussion above. It is not clear, however, that having the MCAS would overcome the excessive coaching on test-taking skills and outright cheating that are commonly induced by high-stakes testing for teacher accountability.

The Joint Commission may want to encourage the Department to explore this issue further. No state has yet been able to effectively translate research into licensure policy by linking student achievement to teacher evaluation. Measuring the costs and benefits of such a system is well beyond the scope of this task force and is worthy of a new and sustained research effort.

### **SUMMARY**

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According to economist Eric A. Hanushek, "The difference between a good and a bad teacher can be a full level of achievement in a single school year." To the extent that teacher assessment helps to raise the quality of teaching, continuing state assessments will help to promote greater student learning. State assessments should combine the MECT with authentic, performance-based assessments. Such a system would enable teachers to use assessment as a way to improve their instructional craft.

## Appendix A: Context

The environment within which the Task Force found itself identifying teacher assessment options is undergoing significant change. The options were framed within this changing policy context. A summary of that contextual background follows.

### ***State Context:***

#### ***The Education Reform Act of 1993:***

Students across the state are being educated in new ways. The Education Reform Act of 1993 introduced new rigorous curriculum frameworks and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) infused the system with greater student, teacher and school accountability.

This new accountability, combined with the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test, has prompted teacher preparation programs to change their programs, tighten their admissions policies, raise their standards and adopt innovative practices.

For more information on teacher preparation programs, please review Appendix B.

#### ***New Certification Regulations:***

At its November Board Meeting, the Massachusetts Department of Education approved for public comment a draft concept paper for revised *Regulations for the Certification of Education Personnel in Massachusetts*. The revised regulations would (among other reforms) streamline the licensing regulations, create multiple routes to licensure, separate pedagogy from subject matter knowledge and require one year of employment and a passing score on a performance assessment for the Professional License.

#### ***The Special Task Force on Teacher Preparation and the Special Task Force on Recruitment and Retention:***

Assessments alone will not raise the quality of the teacher workforce. Increasing the quality of the preparation programs and broadening the pool of applicants will be equally as important as instituting quality assessments. The Joint Commission's Task Force on Teacher Preparation and Task Force on Recruitment and Retention were reviewing options for these related but separate topics.

#### ***Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program For New Teachers:***

The Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers is an alternate route into the classroom based on a two-part performance assessment model: mentoring and support. Candidates must successfully take the Massachusetts Educator Certification Test prior to admission into the program. Bonus recipients participate in a summer training institute, complete one portfolio during the summer and one during the fall and receive intensive mentoring through their districts during the first year of teaching.

Massachusetts is the only state in the country that currently offers a signing bonus.

### ***National Context:***

#### ***The Aging Workforce:***

Over the next decade, the nation's schools will need to hire 2.2 million teachers, over half of whom will be first-time teachers. Many schools already face shortages of qualified teachers, especially in high-poverty communities and in subjects such as math and science.

The Joint Commission's Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention will consider this issue more comprehensively.

#### ***Other States' Assessment Efforts:***

Virtually all states and the District of Columbia test teachers at some point in the licensing process; almost 30 require would-be teachers to pass a basic skills test even before entering a teacher preparation program. Half of the states test pedagogical knowledge and almost as many test knowledge of subject matter.

Several states are in the planning or discussion stage of requiring performance assessments. Very few states- most notably Connecticut, Indiana and North Carolina- have implemented portfolio assessments.

## **Appendix B: Inventory Of Assessments Employed By a Sample Of Approved Teacher Preparation Programs Around The State**

### **Part I: STATE ASSESSMENTS:**

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act mandated state teacher tests; all candidates for teacher licenses are required to take a two-part test in order to earn a certificate enabling them to teach in Massachusetts' public schools. The tests are aligned to Massachusetts' certification regulations and student learning standards in the state's curriculum frameworks. The tests are criterion-referenced, they measure a candidate's knowledge and skills in relation to a standard rather than to the scores of other candidates.

The communication and literacy skills test consists of a Reading Sub-test and a Writing Sub-test; candidates are required to take subject tests when such tests are available. The tests have multiple choice and open-response items that require responses in essay or problem-solving format. National Evaluation Systems (NES), a national testing company, developed the current test. This company has worked in testing for 25 years and is responsible for 8 other states' teacher tests.

The tests have multiple choice and open-response items that require responses in essay or problem-solving format. The Reading Sub-test, the Writing Sub-test and the subject tests are graded separately; a passing score is required on each.

For more information about the teacher test, please visit  
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/teachertest>.

### ***Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers (MSBP)***

It should be noted Massachusetts has launched a Bonus Signing Program for New Teachers; it is the only state sponsored program of its kind in the nation. MSBP is a performance assessment model that combines mentoring and portfolio assessment and serves as an alternate route into the classroom for select recent college graduates and mid-career professionals. To be eligible for admission into the program, individuals must have successfully passed the MECT.

Admittance to the program is not a job guarantee; districts must be willing to hire and mentor bonus recipients. Once the district commits to hiring a bonus recipient, the DOE verifies that there is a mentor on-site and an official district mentor plan. The state offers a number of free mentor training sessions throughout the summer; 50 districts attended a training session this summer.

### ***Training & Assessment***

Bonus recipients participate in a summer institute that includes teaching and site-based seminars and a performance-based portfolio assessment.

As part of the institute, participants create a portfolio which begins to measure outputs and inputs; it is a compilation of demonstrations of instructional methods that impact student behavior/learning. While developing the program's performance assessment, the state considered models from Teach For America and Connecticut. In its portfolio, the state incorporated language about student goals and measuring student achievement and progress toward those goals. This assessment has not yet been validated.

After the summer program participants enter the classrooms with a provisional certificate (contingent upon successful completion of program requirements). The DOE is the recommending/authorizing agent; the University of Massachusetts verifies the work. Teachers submit a formal portfolio to the Department in January; evaluation is based on first semester's demonstrations of student growth and achievement. Successful completion of the portfolio earns teachers Provisional with Advanced Standing certification.

In its first year, Massachusetts awarded 59 candidates a \$20,000 signing bonus, comprehensive training and ongoing support. All 59 signing bonus recipients began teaching in September, 58 remain.<sup>7</sup> In the coming year, the Department plans to offer up to 125 applicants a \$20,000 signing bonus, training and assistance with placement and on-going support. As many as 125 additional applicants will receive a scholarship for the training, and up to another 250 will be admitted into the training. The Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers plans to create avenues for up to 500 applicants to enter the teaching profession through this route by September 2000.

The MBSP spends approximately \$450 per bonus recipient. This figure does not include the bonus, administrative costs such as mailing fees, personnel costs and overhead. It does include all other costs, including recruitment and advertising.

For more information on the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers, please visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/tqe/signing/bonus.html>.

## **Part II. ASSESSMENTS USED BY TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS:**

To identify the assessments which teacher candidates in preparation programs are required to successfully complete to earn their program's endorsement for certification, the Task Force conducted a survey of preparation programs around the state. Seventeen state-approved programs were interviewed and included in this survey.<sup>8</sup> Participants were asked about program requirements and assessments; specifically:

- Approximately how many undergraduates complete the program each year? Graduate students?
- For which certification are program participants being prepared?
- Is there an assessment on the basis of which the program endorses/does not endorse candidates for licensure?
- If yes, please describe that assessment. If no, what are the program requirements?
- Who conducts the assessment? What training do they receive? Is there a rubric that is used for assessment/Which standards are used for assessment?
- What percentage of students is not recommended for licensure?

Participating institutions were chosen according to the following criteria:

- Geography;
- Rigor;
- NCATE certified/non-NCATE certified;
- Program size; and,
- Public/private designation.

All respondents participated in a half-hour phone interview.

Survey responses are synthesized below; findings are organized according to the corresponding survey question. The Joint Commission may wish to recommend the state conduct a deeper analysis and review of all teacher preparation programs and their assessments.

For a more comprehensive review of teacher preparation programs, please refer to the Special Task Force on Teacher Preparation. Or see Maxine Minkoff's larger research effort *Teacher*

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<sup>7</sup> One teacher left the classroom for personal reasons.

<sup>8</sup> Participating programs include: Assumption, Boston College, Clark, Eastern Nazarene, Elms, Fitchburg State, Harvard, Mount Holyoke, Northeastern, Salem State, Simmons, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Westfield State, Western New England College. Department of Education staff was interviewed for information on the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers.

*Development in Massachusetts: A Report for the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission.<sup>9</sup>*

## **FINDINGS:**

*Survey question: Is there an assessment, or series of assessments, on the basis of which the program endorses/does not endorse candidates for licensure? Please describe that assessment and/or the program requirements.*

All teacher preparation programs — institutions of higher education, district programs and the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers (MSBP) — assess their candidates in a variety of ways throughout the program; all reported that their assessments are cumulative in nature. Program participants are required to complete a set of assessments in their pre-practicum (classroom observations), academic coursework (including an academic major and a minor in education) and practicum experience (student teaching).

***Program assessments include, but are not limited to:***

- academic performance in coursework and on final exams,
- standardized assessments of writing, basic skills, content knowledge and pedagogy,
- self-assessments through journals and portfolios,
- informal and formal observations by program faculty and cooperating teachers,
- program portfolios,
- performance-based assessments (classroom observations and portfolios) and public presentations.

None of the respondents employ one-time high-stakes assessments; Less than twenty percent of surveyed programs require exit exams or interviews; none rely on a one-time, high-stakes exit assessment.

Teacher education programs report adapting and strengthening their admission assessments and exit requirements.

### ***Admission Assessments:***

Forty-seven percent of respondents require undergraduate students to apply to the teacher education program. Admission criteria include:

- A transcript reflecting academic performance in introductory coursework- required by fifty percent of respondents with formal program admissions;
- Grade point average (requirements range between 2.5 and 3.5)- required by seventy-five percent of respondents with formal program admissions;
- Field work evaluations (in the pre-practicum)- required by thirty-eight percent of respondents with formal program admissions;
- Interviews with education faculty- required by twenty-five percent of respondents with formal program admissions;
- Personal essays which outline students' educational philosophy- required by thirty-eight percent of respondents with formal program admissions;
- The Massachusetts Educator Certification Test or ETS' Praxis I exam- required by fifty-three percent of respondents with formal program admissions; and,
- Faculty recommendations- required by thirty-eight percent of respondents with formal program admissions

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<sup>9</sup> Minkoff, Maxine. Teacher Development in Massachusetts: A Report for the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission. 1998.

Forty one percent of respondents, including several public institutions, require candidates to successfully complete the State's Communication and Literacy exam before being admitted into the program.

Programs with specific admissions criteria deny admission to many student applicants; other students remove themselves from the program prior to formal acceptance. Few institutions maintain data on students who are not admitted to the program or who self-select out.

**Program Requirements:**

The state has common expectations for all programs; candidates in approved programs (excluding the MSBP) must successfully complete:

- 24 semester hours or a major in the field of concentration;
- 18 semester hours of education coursework (the equivalent of a minor). This includes pre-practicum (classroom observation) field experiences; and,
- 150 hours of a practicum (student teaching) experience which demonstrates the candidate's ability to teach in the area of the certificate

In addition, programs have their own individual requirements. Once candidates have been admitted to the teacher preparation program, eighty-two percent of respondents report that students are instructed and assessed based on the "Principles of Effective Teaching" and the Common Teaching Competencies required by the State Certification Regulations.<sup>10</sup> Seventy-six percent of survey respondents indicated that their program has developed, or is developing, an assessment rubric for student teaching based on the Principles and the Competencies.

***Teacher candidates are asked to successfully demonstrate academic and performance mastery at mid-point assessments.***

Nearly every respondent indicated that students are required to maintain a certain grade point average (the lowest requirement is a 2.5 or "C"); many respondents have raised, or are planning to raise that average (the highest required GPA is a 3.5 or "B+").

Prior to student teaching, fifty-three percent of respondents require candidates to successfully complete a content knowledge exam- either the Massachusetts State exam (41 percent) or Praxis exams or an internally developed exam (12 percent)- to ensure comprehensive subject area knowledge. This includes several public institutions.

Almost ninety percent of programs require a program portfolio; in nearly every instance the portfolio is required to provide a demonstration of the state's competencies. This is used in variety of ways across programs: as a diagnostic tool, as a forum for self-reflection, as a summative assessment, etc. Forty-percent of the respondents that use portfolios have developed a specific scoring rubric for the portfolio which outlined requirements for it and evaluation procedures. Twenty-four percent of programs indicated that there were no grading rubrics for program requirements.

*Survey question: Who conducts the assessments? What training do assessors receive? Is there an assessment rubric/ which standards are used for assessment?*

Who conducts student assessments varies dramatically across programs and type of assessment. Students' academic performance in their coursework is assessed by their professors; most programs reported that individual instructors provide students with course rubrics. In almost every program that requires a portfolio, faculty and K-12 teachers review student portfolios. Several programs reported that students review and offer feedback on their peers' portfolios and teaching performance.

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<sup>10</sup> In the Department of Education's draft concept paper for the revised *Regulations for the Certification of Education Personnel* the Department has revised and renamed the Principles of Effective Teaching and the Common Teaching Competencies. The proposed changes are called Professional Standards for Teachers.

In seventy-one percent of interviewed programs, faculty- full-time and adjunct- conduct assessments of student teachers. The other twenty-nine percent of interviewed programs employ K-12 teachers, graduate students and individuals with supervisory experience to serve as supervisors and assessors for student teachers.

Forty-seven percent of interviewed programs conduct formal, structured trainings for student teacher supervisors/assessors. Every program indicated that they provide training for new supervisors. Almost every interviewed program holds regular meetings or fosters close collaboration between supervisors. Seventy-six percent of programs are developing or have developed a rubric for grading student teachers; the other twenty-four percent indicated that close collaboration over years of program implementation has led to a de facto assessment rubric.

Programs reported their rubrics are based on state requirements, NCATE standards and internal research/program requirements.

***Survey question: What percentage of students is not recommended for licensure?***

Throughout all of the programs, students who do not successfully complete mid-point assessments, or who do not meet other program requirements, withdraw or are counseled out of the program. Little data is kept on these students; programs indicate that it would be difficult to identify a proportion of the total number. Every program reported that for those who do meet all program requirements, including successful completion of student teaching, approximately 99 percent of candidates are endorsed for licensure.

## Appendix C: Other states' attempts to link student achievement and teacher evaluation

### Texas

In Texas, student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS, currently administered to students in grades 3-8 and 10 and in the 2002-03 school year will be expanded to include grades 9 and 11) has been a small part of annual teacher evaluation for the past few years. Student scores are not disaggregated to track the performance of individual classrooms of individual teachers; teachers are held accountable for their entire school's performance. Overall campus achievement counts as one-eighth of a teacher's annual review. This group approach was intentional: the goal was to encourage teachers to begin to work as a team. There are no direct consequences for teachers with low achieving classes.

1998-1999 was the first school year in which a school's performance and state rating was part of the teacher evaluation system. There appeared to be little adverse effect on evaluations; state officials claim that teachers now take student achievement and professional development more seriously.

Texas has received much commendation for steadily rising student TAAS scores. This may not, however, be attributable to improved instruction. Although scores on the 1998 TAAS tests were higher than those in 1995, Deputy Commissioner of Education Sandra Stotsky suggests the reason may relate more to the overall level of reading difficulty of the selections on the tests than student learning.<sup>11</sup>

### Florida

Since 1997 Florida law has required that student test scores be the primary source of district teacher appraisal. Principals evaluate teachers' strengths and weaknesses through a combined analysis of student grades, test scores and disciplinary records. Although licensure is not tied to student achievement, salary is. (By 2001 all districts will be required to have pay-for-performance structures in place.) And because student achievement is one part of a teacher's yearly review, employment could also be linked to student scores. Statutory language for teacher assessment reads as follows:

"the assessment must primarily use data and indicators of improvement in student performance assessed annually as specified in s. 229.57 and may consider results of peer reviews in evaluating the employee's performance. Student performance must be measured by state assessments required under s. 229.57"

To accommodate this legislation, the state has had to create a test that is administered to every grade. (This test is a supplement to the high stakes state test; students in grades 4, 5, 8 and 10 still take the full Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.) The new test is shorter and, according to Florida Department of Education personnel, contains fewer open-ended performance questions and more multiple-choice items.

Although response from the education community has varied in every district, almost every district has been forced to renegotiate with its union. Administrators have had mixed reactions, in part because student test scores are not released until May and teacher performance appraisals are due before then.

Florida Department of Education Officials report that this policy is too new to measure its impact on teacher quality but indicate that the state is relying on national research which suggests teacher quality is the most important way to increase student achievement.

Officials also report that the policy is so new there are many timelines and details that still need to be aligned.

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<sup>11</sup> Schrag, P. Too Good To Be True. *The American Prospect*. (1/00).

## Reforming Teacher Assessment

### An Addendum to the Task Force Report<sup>12</sup>

The report of the Task Force discusses a wide range of policy options. Perhaps for this reason, the report does not contain detailed discussion of the arguments for and against many of those options. This addendum represents an attempt to supply some of the background analysis that will help the Joint Commission to choose from the alternatives before it. This analysis also demonstrates that there are additional policies the Joint Commission should consider as it decides how to assess teachers for purposes of state licensure. In several important respects these additional policies complement the choices the Task Force has outlined. This complementary function will become more apparent as we consider the two main issues before the Task Force: the reform of initial and professional licensure.

#### Initial Licensure

Initial licensure is the licensing of new teachers. Under this term I include the licensing of teachers who have not completed a traditional program of teacher education (what has been known as "provisional certification") as well as teachers who have completed such programs ("provisional certification with advanced standing").

The basic problem facing the state at this stage is distinguishing persons who show sufficient promise as teachers from those who do not. The unfortunate reality is that there is no good solution. None of the indicators used to identify who will be effective in the classroom has much predictive validity. The correlation between teaching performance and measurable teacher characteristics -- grades, test scores, college program -- is modest. In large part, this is because effective teaching depends on many personal attributes that the available assessments do not capture. Inevitably, the licensure process is fraught with error. Some persons will be denied licenses who would nonetheless have made good teachers: although they score poorly on the assessment instrument (whatever it may be), they compensate in ways that are unmeasured. Conversely, others who receive licenses turn out not to be very effective in the classroom.

Massachusetts currently uses tests of basic reading and writing skills and of subject knowledge to license beginning teachers. Can the state reasonably do more? One proposal is to broaden the domain of the teacher test to include pedagogy. Although pencil-and-paper tests of pedagogical knowledge exist, there is wide agreement among educators that these tests are too contrived to assess teaching ability. Good teaching is very much a matter of making the right decision *in context*. Written tests of pedagogical knowledge typically provide such a thin description of the context that it is impossible to know which of the given answers is correct: depending on what additional assumptions one brings to the question, more than one answer may seem right. Or none of them.

Dissatisfaction with these tests has been one of the reasons for growing interest in so-called "authentic" or "genuine" assessments, in which teachers are evaluated based on their own performance with their own students. Whatever the merits of these assessments, it is clear that they are best suited to evaluating teachers once they have begun to practice. They are not well-suited to initial licensure, since beginning teachers have had little opportunity to engage in authentic practice. Student teaching, although a valuable experience, does not tell us enough about how a teacher will perform with his or her own class. Moreover, many teachers who enter through alternative certification will not have had even this much prior experience.

Some teacher education programs (including some innovative alternatives, such as Teach for America) require teacher candidates to prepare portfolios. Again, this is probably a

<sup>12</sup> Prepared by Dale Ballou, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

valuable learning experience for the candidate. But the portfolio will be shaped by the courses the prospective teacher has completed and the structured clinical experiences provided in the program. It will reflect the training the candidate has received rather than his or her own future classroom practice.

Finally, teaching is learned on the job: "One learns to teach by doing it." In consequence, there is something fundamentally incongruous in the effort to assess teaching performance in advance of actual practice. Authentic assessment is only possible after a teacher has spent a year or two in the classroom.

In sum, it is very hard for the state to assure high quality teachers through initial licensure. It is too early to engage in authentic assessment. The available instruments for predicting performance are flawed. Test scores, grades, candidate portfolios -- none of them tell us that much about how someone will perform as a teacher. Accordingly, any decision to add further assessments to those the state already uses should be tempered by the recognition that the positive impact on teacher quality is apt to be slight.

Because the state is not well-positioned to determine who can and cannot teach, there is a case for enhancing the role of those who have better information about prospective teachers. State licensure is embedded in a larger process for the recruitment, training, and induction of new teachers. The other key players in this process are the teacher education programs that train new teachers and the school districts that hire them. Teacher educators and school administrators have many more opportunities to observe teacher candidates, to work with them over time, to watch them in practice, etc. Thus, one option for public policy is to strengthen incentives for teacher educators and school administrators to put these opportunities to good use.

Educators in teacher training programs work with aspiring teachers over an extended period and have the opportunity to observe them in a variety of settings. They are able to observe personal characteristics (enthusiasm, sense of humor, drive) that contribute to effective teaching but are not measured by teacher tests. Their input in determining who is fit to teach and who is not should be of considerable value.

It is unclear, however, that teacher educators presently play much of a role in this process. In the current licensure system, teacher education programs are asked to forward a list of prospective teachers to the state whom they have endorsed for licensure. So far as the Task Force has been able to determine, very few persons are denied the endorsement of their program. Those who run these programs claim that by the time their students have reached this point, the overwhelming majority are ready for the classroom. However, no data have been collected on the proportion of prospective teachers who are screened out before this point in the program. The extremely lax admission and grading standards on many college campuses (particularly in schools of education), plus the incentive that programs have to maintain high enrollments, raise some doubts on this score.

The current program for testing of new teachers in Massachusetts represents, in part, an effort to make teacher education programs more accountable for the quality of their graduates. However, the test measures only some of the skills that contribute to effective teaching. Other incentives would be needed to induce teacher education programs to make better use of their opportunity to recruit and prepare teachers who excel with respect to a wide variety of criteria, both tested and non-tested, and to withhold endorsements from candidates who do not measure up.

A reasonable step in this direction would be to collect and disseminate information about the graduates of the various teacher education programs: what proportion are subsequently employed as teachers; what kinds of districts they work in; how long they remain on the job; and how satisfied their supervisors are with their performance. This information (aggregated to protect the identities of individuals) should be published about each teacher education program, thus furnishing a "report card" on the program.

Given the imperfections in the licensing process, it is important to recognize that licensure per se does not put anyone in the classroom. Newly licensed teachers must still find jobs. The competitive screening that candidates undergo to obtain teaching positions constitutes another assessment of competency. Indeed, the better school districts are at identifying promising new teachers, the less critical the licensure decision becomes: the competitive screening of job applicants serves as a back-up to licensure, a chance to catch mistakes made when certificates are granted to persons who are not likely to become effective teachers.

Moreover, school districts have some distinct advantages over the state when it comes to evaluating the ability of prospective employees. Often districts have had opportunities to observe performance first-hand, when they hire teachers who have worked as aides or substitutes within the district. Even when this is not so, districts can ask candidates to teach a sample lesson and respond to samples of student work in order to assess their skills. Candidates can be put through rigorous, in-depth interviews to probe their subject knowledge. All in all, it is difficult to think what the state can do to assess teacher readiness that school districts cannot do more effectively, except perhaps administer standardized tests.

There are two implications for public policy. First, the state can offset weaknesses in its own licensure system by following policies that encourage districts to make the most of their opportunities to screen applicants carefully and to hire the best teachers available. Such policies include efforts to increase the accountability of schools for educational outcomes and to empower local administrators to make hiring decisions free of interference from school boards and teacher unions. Massachusetts has already moved in this direction. The foregoing analysis suggests that further improvements in the accountability system would do more to assure the quality of new teachers than anything the state might undertake in the area of licensure.<sup>13</sup> Second, even in the best circumstances, the quality of newly hired teachers will be uncertain. The mere fact that a new teacher holds a license and has passed through a competitive screening process offers no guarantee of ability. This calls into question current practices that place students in the sole charge of untested novice instructors. Ideally, new teachers should probably spend their first year team-teaching with a veteran master teacher. At a minimum, new teachers need substantial mentoring and support in their first year. Indeed, even the best new teachers typically find they are not well-prepared to assume the responsibilities of running a classroom unaided.

### Professional Licensure

A professional or standard license is awarded after a teacher has been in the classroom one or more years and has met various criteria indicating a certain level of mastery. These criteria may include earning an advanced degree, meeting locally-determined standards of performance, or passing some form of “authentic” assessment.

The first question to be asked about professional licensure is whether it is needed. Once a new teacher has obtained employment, the persons in the best position to evaluate performance are the teacher’s immediate supervisors, including department chairpersons and principals. It is the responsibility of these supervisors to assess performance early in a teacher’s career and to take appropriate action to remediate problems and dismiss poor performers. If local administrators do their jobs, what purpose is served by another level of licensure?

It may seem that school administrators already have sufficient incentive to carry out these tasks. After all, who wants to employ mediocre teachers? However, in practice schools

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13 One of the weaknesses of the current accountability system is the absence of meaningful checks on the performance of schools in affluent communities, where students have little difficulty meeting the minimum proficiency standards established by the state. Yet it is not only poor minority students who can be shortchanged by their schools.

have often failed to make the best use of their opportunity to monitor performance and dismiss weak teachers during their probationary years. Among the reasons are the following.

(1) Particularly in small towns, administrators are reluctant to fire someone who is a member of the community, whom they may continue to meet informally, or whose relatives are friends and acquaintances.

(2) Administrators are uncertain that they will be able to hire anyone better. (This is, of course, a legitimate reason for retaining an employee. But school administrators may be excessively risk averse.)

(3) Supervisors invest too much emotionally in helping a struggling new teacher and find it difficult to admit failure by letting the teacher go.

(4) Supervisors fear litigation, particularly where state law or union contracts insist they document the reasons for dismissing the teacher. Requiring that these decisions be justified in writing raises a red flag for administrators wary of law suits.

(5) Teachers threatened with dismissal have gone to friends or allies on the school board, who have then pressured administrators to reverse the decision.

(6) State law or union contracts often require districts to notify teachers by late winter or early spring whether they will have a job the following year. Teachers who are dismissed therefore have several months in which to retaliate, possibly taking out their resentment on their students.

As this list suggests, by reducing the threat of litigation and retaliation, the state could make it easier for districts to let ineffective teachers go. However, there is no direct remedy for some of the items in the list. For understandable reasons, it is hard for supervisors to fire employees. Private sector CEO's have often said the same thing: without the discipline of the marketplace, it would be very difficult to undertake such steps as large-scale lay-offs to rescue failing firms. Although public education notoriously lacks this kind of discipline, to the extent that schools can be held accountable for results, it becomes more likely that administrators will put the welfare of students ahead of the personal cost of making hard personnel decisions.

Is this enough, or does the state need to do more by including some kind of performance assessment as a condition of professional licensure? There are at least two important arguments in favor of a larger role. First, where supervisors want to take a tougher line on teacher performance but find it hard to do so for the reasons given above, it can be helpful to have the state play the part of the "bad cop." In such circumstances, local administrators can blame the decision not to renew a teacher's contract on an external assessment (even if privately they share the same dim view of the teacher's ability). Second, there are districts where a bad cop is truly needed: where lazy administrators do not want to go to the trouble of replacing a teacher, or incompetent supervisors do not recognize poor performance, or where teaching jobs are awarded on the basis of nepotism, cronyism, and political patronage.

Broadly speaking, there are three possible forms this kind of assessment could take. The first is for the teacher to be observed in the classroom by a jury of her peers -- ideally, veteran master teachers who have been trained for this purpose and are on leave from their regular jobs. The second is for the teacher to respond to a variety of stimuli in a simulated classroom setting. The assessment center exercises administered to candidates for National Board Certification are an example of this type of evaluation. Third, candidates could submit portfolios of their work to a jury of their peers.

Connecticut has experimented with all three forms of assessment, mostly recently abandoning both classroom observation and assessment center exercises in favor of portfolios. Among the rationales for this change of policy was the low discriminatory power of the observation instrument. Failure rates on the initial set of six observations were in the 7-8

percent range. Those who failed were observed an additional six times, lowering the final failure rate to less than one percent. The Connecticut DOE concluded that with coaching virtually all teachers are able to pass this assessment: in short, performance on the instrument could be "faked." Assessment center exercises were felt to be too artificial: teachers were responding to stimuli with answers that they felt the assessor wanted to hear, not what they would in fact do.

The centerpiece of the Connecticut teacher assessment system is now the portfolio. Portfolios have three components: (1) lesson plans, including goals for specific students; (2) examples of the work of these students, with teacher commentary and ideas for further lessons; (3) videotapes of the teacher interacting with students in the classroom. Lessons are to be provided for a period of one to two weeks, during which the teacher covers a unit or otherwise moves through sequenced material in a way that reveals how students progressed over time and how the teacher structured new activities and assignments in response to their progress.

Portfolios are scored by teachers of the same subject who have received special training. A single team of scorers reads and evaluates all portions of the portfolio, facilitating cross-validation of the information contained in different parts of the portfolio. Portfolios are given scores from 1 to 4, with 1 the weakest (a failing grade).

The breakdown of scores for the most recent year for all content areas (746 portfolios) was:

Score	Percent
4	16%
3	31%
2	39%
1	15%

These are scores for first-time submissions. No data are yet available on how many of the 15% who failed will succeed on the second submission, though one DOE official hazarded a guess that half would pass.

New teachers in Connecticut work closely with mentors and support teams. A substantial amount of assistance and coaching is available for teachers as they prepare portfolios, including seminars and clinics, university courses, and portfolio conferences. In addition, Connecticut's programs of teacher education are training their students in aspects of portfolio preparation.

Despite the fact that candidates have the benefit of coaching and are able to select material for the portfolio that presents themselves in the best light, DOE maintains that portfolios are a very useful instrument for exposing teachers' weaknesses. Based on an opportunity to observe a trained (and perceptive) scorer react to a portfolio, I would concur that portfolios are revealing documents, though much depends on the scorer's skill in extracting the relevant information.

The state also considers portfolios to be a valuable form of professional development. It also believes that the full set of activities associated with teacher assessment -- including mentoring, the training of veteran teachers to score portfolios, and portfolio preparation by new teachers -- have helped to spread a set of widely-shared standards and approaches to teaching that (it is hoped) will improve collegiality and cooperation among teachers at the school level.

Although portfolios appear to be a promising form of assessment, it would be useful to know more before embarking on a similar reform.

1. Portfolios are the latest in a series of teacher assessments. Presumably the others seemed promising, too, when first adopted, but they were eventually set aside. Portfolios may prove to be superior to the previous instruments (that is the Connecticut DOE's present view), but they have not been in use very long. Of particular concern is the possibility that with sufficient coaching, new teachers will learn how to "fake" portfolios in the same way that they

learned how to "fake" a performance for classroom observers. With all portfolio material selected by the candidate, who can offer *ex post* rationalizations of his or her actions in the classroom, candidates have ample occasion to portray themselves as better teachers than in fact they are.

It is probably relevant to note that in the other major example of the use of portfolios to assess teacher practice -- certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards -- pass rates have steadily risen. Some educators who work with teachers preparing portfolios are concerned that too much assistance is provided candidates for board certification. The National Board, like the Connecticut DOE, maintains that performance on its assessments cannot be faked, but educators in the field are worried about just this issue.

2. One question that should be asked about any assessment is whether it provides information that cannot be obtained more economically by other means. In the case of Connecticut's portfolio assessment, the question is to what extent the scores on portfolios merely duplicate information already in the state's possession or easily collected, such as test scores and college GPA. The state has already begun to look at data on this point, but the researcher to whom I spoke was unwilling to reveal the correlation between portfolio scores and these other measures on the basis of preliminary analysis. From the remarks she let fall, it seemed clear that the correlation was high, but all I could obtain was a statement that more would be known in the next several months, suggesting that at some point the state may release this information.

For those teachers who fail the initial portfolio submission, the assessment process does not finally come to an end until the spring of the teacher's third year in the classroom. In Connecticut, the probationary period for new teachers is four years. Thus, the state's assessment for licensure is nearly coterminous with the district's tenure decision, which raises in another form the question we have been considering. How many of the teachers denied licensure would have been dismissed by the districts employing them anyway? Unfortunately, the state has no records on the number of probationary teachers whose contracts are not renewed. It is also true, of course, that a teacher denied tenure in one district can seek employment elsewhere, something that would be precluded by the withdrawal of a license.

3. During the coming year the state will be conducting the first investigation of the predictive validity of its portfolio assessments. Students' gains on the Connecticut Mastery Tests (between fall 1999 and spring 2000) will be compared to the scores their teachers receive on portfolios in order to determine how strong the correlation is between the two. Results from this study will not be available until fall of 2000, at the earliest.

#### The Appropriate Division of Local and State Authority

Portfolios may prove to be a valuable way of assessing teaching performance, but at this point it seems prudent to anticipate that they will exhibit some of the same flaws as other instruments. One of the problems -- that performance can be faked -- has already been mentioned. Other teachers may fare poorly in this assessment not because they are ineffective classroom teachers, but because they are not very skillful at putting together a portfolio. (We are still waiting on the research that will demonstrate whether the skills needed to construct a passing portfolio are the same as those needed to teach.) In short, even the best assessment instruments available to the state are likely to be flawed. Some persons will be licensed who are not, after all, good teachers. And among those who fail the assessment will be teachers who are superior to the persons who must be hired in their places.

This means there is still an important role for local authorities to play. The mere fact that a teacher can earn a professional license is not a guarantee of effectiveness. Competent local administrators will be needed to decide which licensed teachers ought in fact to be teaching. Nor is there any reason to think the decision will always be the same. Some teachers will be right for some schools, wrong for others. Sorting the right people into the right jobs is clearly a task for local administrators, not a licensure system.

Thus, all the earlier remarks about the importance of strengthening incentives so that local administrators carry out their tasks responsibly still apply. Even with a reasonably good licensure system, administrators must still make sound personnel decisions. Which leads to the second point: to the extent that local administrators can be entrusted with this responsibility, a licensure system becomes at best redundant, at worst a constraint that hampers faculty recruitment. What happens when the state denies a license to a teacher deemed effective by her supervisors? Is our confidence in these assessments so high that outside evaluators should overrule personnel decisions made by administrators with greater knowledge of local needs and, one would hope, more familiarity with the teacher's strength and weaknesses?

A sound system of teacher assessment requires a balance of state and local authority: a licensure system run by the state that serves the legitimate functions described above, but that leaves sufficient autonomy for school administrators to meet local needs using information that only they are likely to acquire. This suggests that along with any performance assessment the state adopts for professional licensure, local administrators be accorded the opportunity to present their own assessment of teacher's fitness when an outside evaluation would result in the denial of a license. In deciding how much weight to give to this evidence, the panel that hears the district's appeal should take into account, among other things, the administrators' record in managing the school. In the case of well-run schools, there should be a presumption in favor of the local administrator.

The same logic suggests that the state make a similar presumption in the matter of teacher recruitment, when such schools seek to hire candidates who do not meet the ordinary requirements for an initial license. This is of particular concern to districts that do not enjoy a wide choice of applicants when filling positions. Rigid adherence to state licensure deprives these districts of the opportunity to consider potential candidates who fall a few points short of receiving a license, no matter what other unmeasured skills and talents these candidates might bring to teaching.

These options illustrate how Massachusetts might make creative use of the information it seeks from its ambitious program to evaluate its public schools. I think it is safe to say that much of the public, and certainly the education profession, is wary of this process and the uses to which this information will be put. But this program ought to be seen as more than a report card. It should be part of a systematic effort to apportion the responsibilities for teacher recruitment and induction between state and local authorities in a way that restricts the state to the functions it best serves and makes maximal use of local information and initiative. Where student achievement is high (with due allowance for local social and economic conditions), school administrators are entitled to the presumption that they know what they are doing when it comes to recruiting and evaluating staff<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that this proposal is the reverse of a policy described in the Task Force report, where it is suggested that the way schools evaluate teachers could be one of the bases for grading the overall performance of the school. By contrast, the analysis presented in this addendum suggests that schools be evaluated on the basis of student achievement and that the state not interfere with personnel decisions when educational outcomes provide no warrant for such interference.

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American Federation of Teachers: <http://www.aft.org>

Council of Chief State School Officers: <http://www.ccsso.org/>

Educational Testing Service:

<http://www.teachingandlearning.org/profdvlp/pathwise/clsobsys/index.html#whatis>

Education Week: <http://www.edweek.com>

Mass. Department of Education: <http://www.doe.mass.edu>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/>

Online Guide to Florida Legislation: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>

Teach For America: <http://www.teachforamerica.org>

Toledo Federation of Teachers site: <http://www.tft250.org/>

**Individual faculty and Staff:**

Assumption College  
Boston College  
Brandeis University  
Clark University  
Colorado Department of Education  
Connecticut Department of Education  
Council of Chief State School Officers  
Eastern Nazarene College  
Elms College  
Florida Department of Education  
Lesley College  
Harvard Graduate School of Education  
Massachusetts Department of Education

Mount Holyoke College  
National Alliance of Business  
North Carolina Department of Education  
Northeastern University  
Oklahoma Department of Education  
Salem State College  
Simmons College  
Tennessee Department of Education  
Texas Department of Education  
UMASS/Amherst  
UMASS/Dartmouth  
Westfield State College  
Western New England College



## **Appendix C**

# **The Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

## **Report to the Joint Commission on**

### **Educator Preparation**

**February 4, 2000**

**JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION  
TASK FORCE ON TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND  
RETENTION**

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## Executive Summary

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### Report to the Joint Commission Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention

The Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention (Task Force) was presented in the fall of 1999 with the following charge: To examine and report to the Joint Commission on the following questions and topics:

- Supply and Demand of Educators over the Next Decade(s);
- Broadening the Pool of Teacher Candidates; and
- Incentives and Barriers to Entry into the Teaching Profession.

The goal of the Task Force, in short, was to assist the State in its efforts to attract students and professionals to the teaching profession who are capable of performing at high levels to meet the future needs of all school districts in the State of Massachusetts.

#### Summary of Recommended Options

The Task Force recommends the following options for discussion and further action by the Joint Commission:

- Make the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, long-term data-collection, analysis, and dissemination system a high priority at the Department of Education.
- Foster collaboration with colleges, universities and school districts in efforts to recruit, prepare and appoint the teachers needed by school districts.
- Take more active steps to recruit qualified members of minority groups to teach in Massachusetts' public schools.
- Increase financial support to subsidize the preparation of teachers – and thus to expand the supply of qualified teacher applicants.
- Examine the current teacher certification requirements, and lessen and/or remove some of the existing barriers to entering the teaching profession in Massachusetts.
- Establish and fund a minimum salary level for all teachers in the State, similar to what was done in 1987, in order to bridge the gap between the entering salary levels of teachers and those of other professionals.
- Take steps to improve the working conditions of teaching, such as increasing opportunities for career development, expanding the current induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers, and recognizing teacher excellence.
- Form an oversight committee to assist with the implementation strategies adopted by the State to address teacher recruitment and retention.

## Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention

### I. Charge to the Task Force

The Joint Commission on Educator Preparation presented to the Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention (Task Force) the following charge in the fall of 1999:

To examine and report to the Joint Commission on the following questions and topics:

Supply and Demand of Educators over the Next Decade(s);

Broadening the Pool of Teacher Candidates; and

Incentives and Barriers to Entry into the Teaching Profession.

To suggest alternatives for action on addressing these issues.

### II. General Background and Observations

Many educators have proclaimed that one of the toughest challenges facing public education in the next decade is ensuring an adequate supply of highly qualified candidates to fill the needs of the nation's public schools.

The convergence of several projected trends creates a strong need for policy-makers to take this challenge seriously. First, it is projected that over the next decade nearly one-half of the nation's teachers will leave the profession through retirement and resignation. Second, it is projected that over the next decade the nation's student enrollment will continue to increase at a modest rate. Third, it is projected that over the next decade class size reductions and early childhood education will continue to be major priorities in public education. These projections, when coupled with renewed emphasis on improving public education through more rigorous preparation and hiring of highly qualified teachers, should lead policy-makers to give credence to the challenge. Two other contributing factors make the challenge even more pressing: (1) many more career options are now open to women and minorities (those formerly attracted to the education profession) and (2) there exists a general shortage of qualified workers in most sectors of the economy.

In attempting to prepare options on how the State of Massachusetts should address this challenge, the Task Force, comprised of "practitioners" and not "academics," relied primarily on the experience of its members as well as the numerous reports which continue to be released, all with a common theme: *policy-makers need to take bold steps to ensure that an ample supply of qualified teachers will continue to be prepared so that the promise of improved student achievement can be realized.*

At the outset, the Task Force recognized that much has been done on the research side of the equation regarding teacher recruitment and retention. The Task Force members understand, however, that much more remains be done by the key players (the Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, colleges and universities, and local school districts) to formulate effective strategies that can be used by practitioners struggling to find and keep qualified teachers for the Commonwealth's classrooms.

Many options need to be explored by the Joint Commission in order to ensure that Massachusetts maintains a competitive advantage over other states. In formulating its recommendations, the Task Force convened meetings from November, 1999 through January 2000, including a three-hour focus group discussion with nine teachers (career professionals, new teachers, and former teachers representing various disciplines and

teaching experience in the Framingham, Milton, Weston, Scituate, and Brookline public schools and out of state).

The Task Force members believe that the challenge can best be met by modeling recruitment strategies used in the private sector when addressing shortages in the work force, most recently used to deal with the national shortage of qualified information systems personnel. Such strategies can be readily adapted to education. Such efforts typically include market surveys to obtain data focused on supply and demand as well as wages, benefits and working conditions; identification of available resources and recruitment sources; development, communication, and implementation of the corporate strategy; and, the use of technology to monitor and support the recruitment efforts.

For the strategy to be effective, it must be developed with the understanding that it is multi-faceted. Minimally, the strategy must include ways to target each of the following potential sources for teacher development:

- a. Pre-collegiate: Talented high school -- and possibly middle school -- students need to become informed and interested in pursuing teaching as a career.
- b. Collegiate: (undergraduate and graduate) Talented students enrolled in colleges and universities across all disciplines need to be attracted and counseled to the profession.
- c. Post Graduates and Professionals: Talented professionals from all related sectors need to be attracted to consider changing careers. This group will also include former teachers (especially those who left the profession to raise families) and current private school teachers.
- d. Others: Included in this group are teacher aides and military personnel, as well as others who may meet the standards of teaching.

Like many other challenges, this one can be turned into an opportunity whereby the State can address some of the lingering issues which have heretofore been left unattended, and bring into the professional teaching work force the best and the brightest students and professionals who would otherwise seek alternative careers.

### **III. Status of Massachusetts' Efforts**

The State of Massachusetts has done much to address some of the issues associated with teacher development which were identified in reports dating back to the Carnegie Report, *A Nation at Risk*. The State has revamped teacher certification requirements and has addressed some of the issues regarding teacher competency. More recently, the State has initiated a number of teacher candidate recruitment strategies for which the proponents should be commended. Among these are the Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for Teachers, the Future Teachers of Massachusetts, Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program, Aspiring Teachers Scholarships, Attracting Excellence to Teaching, and Goals 2000 Preservice and Eisenhower Higher Education Preservice Grant Program: Recruitment and Preparation to Diversify the Teaching Profession. Individually, each of these initiatives address in a small way concerns which will need to be addressed in far larger ways as the State and the nation confront the aging teacher population and the dramatic turnover which is anticipated to take place over the next decade.

The Task Force strongly encourages the Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education to collaborate in the collection and analysis of data to project both the supply of teachers and the areas of demand anticipated five to ten years from now. For too long, the education industry has reacted only after the shortage has arrived, preparing teachers in a particular discipline only to create a glut in the face of shortages in new areas. Such

data must then be shared with colleges, universities and local school districts. We believe that doing so will provide guidance to colleges and universities as they work to prepare candidates for the teaching jobs that are anticipated to be available at the time of graduation. It will also assure local districts that they will have candidates who will match their areas of need. Finally, collecting and disseminating such projections will allow teacher candidates to make educated decisions about their own professional training - ones that factor in the availability of teaching positions upon completion of their preparation programs.

During discussions of the Task Force, it became clear that whatever approach the State chooses, it must take into consideration the involvement of local school districts, local colleges and universities, and national policy direction. Local school districts both define teacher vacancies and decide which teacher candidates are hired to fill these vacancies. Colleges and universities must be prepared to identify and prepare the future teachers who will meet the needs of the local school districts. An appropriate planning mechanism must be developed in which local districts adequately project their needs; colleges and universities prepare teachers to meet these needs; and the State develops strategies to recruit promising high school and college students, professionals from other industries, and former teachers to fill the needs.

In carrying out its task, the Task Force used as its guiding principle the need to maintain high standards of teacher excellence while ensuring an ample supply of qualified teacher candidates. While the current debate appears to be focused on addressing teacher quality, it now - given the projected shortages - must focus on addressing the quantity of quality teachers. It is imperative that high quality candidates (students and professionals) be attracted to the profession. Such candidates must demonstrate mastery of the English language and subject matter knowledge, knowledge of pedagogy appropriate to the level of instruction, ability to guide students, ability to impart knowledge, and ability to control a classroom.

In its deliberations, the State's policy makers must make strategic decisions regarding teacher compensation in general. While the Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers has done much to raise awareness of the critical need of attracting high quality teacher candidates to the profession, it follows logically that teacher compensation is lagging behind other professions. A recent report of National Association of Colleges and Employers placed teacher salaries for recent college graduates near the bottom of the list (ahead only of salaries for day care providers and social workers). The most recent Education Week report *Quality Counts 2000: Who Should Teach?* not only confirms these figures but suggests that the longer a professional remains in the classroom the greater the gap between his or her earnings and the earnings of those with comparable levels of experience in other professions.

While the Task Force offers most of its suggestions to address the recruitment of teachers, it would follow that to retain teachers, it will be necessary to address some of the issues which impact career professionals. For new recruits, the State should explore the establishment of a new "minimum" teacher salary as was done in the late 1980's. For all teachers, new and veteran, serious consideration should be given to making changes both to the contribution levels and benefits of the teacher retirement system. For former teachers returning to the profession, the state should provide local districts with incentives to ensure that the teacher's prior service and level of experience do not serve as deterrents to being hired. For the professional entering teaching from another field, there should be salary incentives to allow for the adjustment to teacher pay. For the veteran teacher, the State needs to assess new ways to provide additional "retention-based"

compensation, such as the State's current efforts - i.e. T-Cap and Master Teacher Programs.

#### **IV. Recommended Options**

Specifically, the Task Force recommends the following options for discussion and further action:

- Make the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, long-term data-collection, analysis, and dissemination system a high priority at the Department of Education.
- Foster collaboration with local colleges, universities and school districts in efforts to recruit, prepare and appoint the teachers needed by local school districts in Massachusetts.
- Take more active steps to recruit qualified members of minority groups to teach in Massachusetts' public schools.
- Increase financial support to subsidize the preparation of teachers – and thus to expand the supply of qualified teacher applicants.
- Examine the current teacher certification requirements, and lessen and/or remove some of the existing barriers to entering the teaching profession in Massachusetts.
- Establish and fund a minimum salary level for all teachers in the State, similar to what was done in 1987, in order to bridge the gap between the entering salary levels of teachers and those of other professionals.
- Take steps to improve the working conditions of teaching, such as increasing opportunities for career development, expanding the current induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers, and recognizing teacher excellence.
- Form an oversight committee to assist with the implementation strategies adopted by the State to address teacher recruitment and retention.

#### **Developing A Coherent Strategy to Attract and Retain the Best and the Brightest for Massachusetts' Schools**

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##### **• DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND DISSEMINATION**

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###### **The Challenge:**

The Department of Education does not, at present, have the data it needs to guide its educator recruitment, preparation, retention, and accountability efforts. Information on educators is collected and stored by a variety of units both within and outside the Department, the data are incomplete, and the databases are not integrated. The state needs a data system which can collect, analyze, and disseminate comprehensive data regarding educator supply and demand and the success of various recruitment, preparation, and retention programs. Such a data system will enable Massachusetts to make sound policy to meet anticipated personnel needs and ensure the most effective use of its resources.

###### **Here in Massachusetts:**

The Department has recognized the need for improving its data capabilities concerning educational personnel. It has recently been awarded a federal Title II grant, a part of which (\$350,000 in the first of three years) will be used to develop the educator personnel

component of the Department's overall information management system. Development of an Educator Data Warehouse has begun. The Warehouse will allow the Department to collect and store information from a variety of sources (e.g., school districts, educator preparation programs, the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board, the Department's Certification Office, etc.) and use the information to formulate policy. The Department also is developing a "Directory Administration" system, which will allow district-level administrators to log onto a website and update information on all educators in their districts. This component will be in place by mid-May. Between May and August, the Department and school districts will begin updating and "cleaning" district personnel data to provide an initial picture of the state's educator workforce.

While development of the structure for an effective educator data system is well underway, there is no assurance that the Department will have the capacity for collecting and analyzing the needed data on a regular basis. It is important that this aspect of the system be planned and funded. Finally, it is important to ensure that resources are made available to see the development of the entire project through to completion and to maintain it in future years.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Make the development and maintenance of a comprehensive educational personnel data management system a high priority at the Department of Education.
  - a) Ensure the system has the capacity to describe the current workforce, assess current and future supply and demand, and evaluate various programs of recruitment, preparation and retention.
  - b) Ensure that the Department has the capacity to collect and analyze the relevant data.
  - c) Ensure that the system is provided with adequate resources both to achieve complete development and for future maintenance.
2. Conduct annual reviews of the impact of all State programs on teacher recruitment and retention.
  - a) Identify successful and unsuccessful programs by applying cost-benefit analyses to each State program on teacher recruitment and retention.
  - b) Create an oversight committee to assist the reordering of State priorities and funding, if necessary.
3. Collect, analyze and share data on teacher certification, including waivers of certification, with colleges, universities, and local school districts.
  - a) Collect information on the performance and retention of teachers who enter via alternative certification routes versus those who enter through traditional teacher preparation routes. Collect data on the attrition of teachers in the first three years of employment.
  - b) Determine how many teachers currently are on waivers and how many teachers were "lost" during the recertification process.
4. Develop an automated system for collecting and compiling data on projected teacher shortages from districts and universities and disseminating the results to them.

## RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

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*Teacher Recruitment Strategies Must be Comprehensive and Collaborative.*

### **The Challenge:**

First, too often the efforts to prepare teachers at the State's institutions of higher learning are not coordinated with the needs of the school districts and the initiatives at the State level. The State must collaborate with local colleges, universities and school districts in order to recruit, prepare and appoint the teachers needed by local school districts in Massachusetts.

Second, too few potential teacher candidates are encouraged to consider teaching as a profession. Promotion of teaching in Massachusetts must be more comprehensive and can best be accomplished through the voices of teachers, the best recruiters to the field.

Third, the teaching force in the State, as in the rest of the nation<sup>1</sup>, remains overwhelmingly White. Preparing and attracting teachers from diverse backgrounds is equally as important for schools and students as student diversity itself. The State should, therefore, take steps to recruit qualified members of minority groups to teach in our public schools.

Fourth, there are several unnecessary barriers that teacher candidates face in gaining certification and finding positions in Massachusetts school districts. The existence of such barriers is particularly troubling given both the high numbers of Massachusetts teachers set to retire in the coming decade and the projected Massachusetts student enrollment increases over that same time. Without sacrificing the quality of the teaching pool, however, the State can increase the supply of teacher applicants by lessening and/or removing some of these barriers.

Fifth, many qualified individuals do not consider teaching as a profession because of the costs associated with teacher preparation. By subsidizing these costs, the State can play an important role in expanding the supply of qualified teacher applicants. Through financial incentives, the State can also lure prospective teacher candidates into high-need districts and certification areas.

### **Here in Massachusetts:**

The State has taken numerous steps to ramp up its teacher recruitment initiatives. To promote teaching as a career to young people, the Department of Education has awarded grants to Tomorrow's Teachers Clubs in high schools across the State. The Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program also encourages high school students to consider teaching. This program offers tuition remission at public colleges and universities in Massachusetts for students in the top 25% of their classes. 300 students received these scholarships in 1999, although 700 slots were available. The timing and promotion of this program may be contributing to its under-enrollment. The Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship Program also does not gear funding to students who intend to major in high-need areas, which may be another way to coordinate recruitment with the actual needs of school districts.

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, across the nation almost one-third of school-age children are from minority groups, while only 12% of teachers come from these same groups. (*Quality Counts*)

The State's Attracting Excellence to Teaching program also promotes teaching as a career by offering loan forgiveness for high achieving college graduates. This initiative, as well, suffers from under-enrollment due perhaps to poor promotion across universities in Massachusetts. The State's Aspiring Teacher Scholarship Program also assists college students pursuing teaching by funding their last two years of college.

The Massachusetts Signing Bonus Program for New Teachers represents a large, nationwide recruitment effort geared at both college graduates and mid-career professional. Last year, 59 bonus recipients were selected; this year the State plans to expand the program to 125 recipients. This program has been well promoted, with recruiting teams traveling across the country, advertisements put out on the Web and on Boston's subway cars, as well as notices placed in the paychecks of Massachusetts' employees. Finally, Massachusetts is not among 10 states that specifically target minority teaching candidates.

The Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT) represents one alternative route for teaching candidates to gain Provisional Certification with Advanced Standing. In 1999, the program was only available to the 59 bonus recipients. This summer, the State plans to open up participation to up to 500 aspiring teachers. It is not clear at this time whether there will be this many participants.

While the Task Force did not review any data concerning the number of experienced teachers from out of state who have elected to take the Massachusetts Teachers Test, there appears to be strong sentiment that this requirement may deter otherwise qualified teachers from seeking employment in Massachusetts. Several teachers and members of the Task Force indicated strong objections to being required to take the test after serving effectively as teachers or administrators for the greater portion of their careers. In addition, the timing of the test and receipt of its results do not coincide with the heaviest period of teacher appointment decisions. At the very least, it is strongly recommended that the State review these concerns to ensure that there is not an unintended consequence with respect to teachers seeking Massachusetts' certification from out of State.

#### **Recommended Actions**

1. Develop more coordinated and far-reaching strategies for recruiting and appointing teachers in Massachusetts.
  - a) Encourage local school districts and teacher candidates to use the Massachusetts Educators Career Center (MECC), the existing statewide on-line clearinghouse for posting teaching vacancies and candidate information. ([www.doe.mass.edu/mecc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mecc))
  - b) Sponsor, with the existing Massachusetts Educator Recruitment Consortium (MERC), a teacher recruitment program for in-State school districts.
  - c) Form regional recruitment consortia, representing multiple districts.
  - d) Form partnerships with out-placement firms and large corporations to encourage (and provide incentives to) displaced and retired employees to consider teaching. Encourage large corporations to include in their lay-off packages incentives for teacher preparation, such as tuition reimbursements and loan forgiveness programs.
  - e) Facilitate ongoing communication between DOE, colleges and universities, principals, superintendents and human resources professionals regarding

recruitment needs and strategies.

f) Work with local colleges, universities and school districts to recruit and prepare prospective teachers to fill high-need certification areas and high-need districts.

- i) Share information regarding high demand certification areas with colleges and universities.
- ii) Share information regarding high demand certification areas with prospective teacher candidates.
- iii) Encourage schools of education to “ramp up” their efforts to recruit prospective teacher candidates from liberal arts degree programs.
- iv) Develop formal programs with community colleges to support and advise potential teacher candidates.
- v) Provide incentives for teachers who take positions in high-need areas.

g) Reach out beyond Massachusetts in efforts to recruit teachers.

- i) Develop regional approaches with neighboring states to address teacher recruitment.
- ii) Develop strategies for recruiting nationally for Massachusetts’ teacher candidates.

2. Develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting teaching as a desirable career.

a) Sponsor public service announcements espousing the rewards of teaching and the “positive image” of education in general. Collaborate with state-wide organizations such as the MASC, the MTA and the MFT to develop such promotions.

b) Support and encourage efforts that inspire pre-collegiate students to consider teaching as a desirable profession. Capitalize on the high regard which students and parents typically have for their teachers.

- i) Continue to sponsor and expand Tomorrow’s Teachers Clubs in high schools and middle schools.
- ii) Sponsor pre-collegiate teacher recruitment summer institutes.
- iii) Link pre-collegiate teacher outreach initiatives to teacher recruitment and development initiatives.

3. Take steps to recruit qualified members of minority groups to teach in our public schools.

a) Develop financial incentives for minority teacher candidates to teach in Massachusetts Public Schools.

b) Cast a wider net to recruit minority teachers.

- i) Identify and use media outlets that serve minority communities.
- ii) Develop strong networks among the various minority communities.
- iii) Develop relationships with colleges and universities that have a history of attracting minority students.

c) Work with school districts to recruit minority teacher candidates through the development of cohort-based programs.

4. Examine the current teacher certification requirements, and lessen and/or remove some of the existing barriers to entering the teaching profession in Massachusetts.
  - a) Lessen the barriers associated with the Massachusetts teacher certification, appointment and re-certification processes.
    - i) Work to make certification regulations as simple and understandable as possible.
    - ii) Use technology to speed up certification processing.
    - iii) Remove the application costs for processing teacher re-certification applications.
    - iv) Conduct outreach to teachers who have let their certifications lapse.
    - v) Support and encourage alternative certification routes for successful private, parochial and higher education teachers/professors.
    - vi) Re-think the narrow bands of certification that focus on grade-level certification in order to ease the process for appointing teachers.
    - vii) Encourage school districts to develop the flexibility to appoint professionals at steps that reflect their years of professional work, not just their teaching experience level.
    - viii) Encourage school districts to review their teacher appointment processes with the goal of eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic delays.
    - ix) Encourage the development of district-based certification programs which foster collaboration between institutions of higher education and local school districts.
  - b) Remove barriers to teaching in Massachusetts faced by out-of-state teacher applicants.
    - i) Allow for the portability of teachers' licenses and pensions from out of State. Allow for more flexibility regarding certification reciprocity arrangements with other states for experienced, quality teachers.
    - ii) Reconsider the need for experienced teachers who have been successful outside of Massachusetts to take and pass the Massachusetts Teacher Test. Determine if there exist other means to meet this requirement.
5. Subsidize costs associated with teacher preparation to expand the supply of qualified teacher applicants.
  - a) Subsidize some of the costs associated with teacher preparation at colleges and universities.
    - i) Provide free courses and tuition reimbursement programs to meet certification requirements at private and public colleges and universities in Massachusetts.
    - ii) Adjust and expand loan forgiveness/repayment programs to attract teachers into shortage (and anticipated shortage) areas (i.e. urban districts, in Science, Math etc.).
    - iii) Provide tuition reimbursements, low cost loans, and/or subsidies for

graduate study, such as Master's programs that lead to teacher certification.

- iv) Assist para-professionals who have a minimum of an associate's degree in their efforts to obtain bachelor's degrees leading to teacher certification.
- b) Improve the promotion of existing scholarship and loan forgiveness programs in high schools and colleges. Ensure that guidance counselors and school administrators are fully aware of these opportunities.
- c) Collaborate with districts, universities and colleges to develop district or regional teacher preparation centers. Support one-year paid internships for teacher candidates in Professional Development School settings.

## RETENTION

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*We Must Improve the Salaries, Benefits and Working Conditions of Teaching.*

### **The Challenge:**

While no one goes into teaching to become rich, no one should have to leave teaching in order to earn enough to provide for a family. Realistically, many qualified teaching candidates choose alternative professions due to the relatively low pay and poor working conditions associated with teaching. Others, who choose to teach, often leave within the first few years because of low pay, little prospect for advancement, and difficult work environments. The State must, therefore, do what it can to improve teaching salaries, benefits and working conditions – both in order to recruit talented individuals to the profession and to retain these individuals in Massachusetts' schools.

### **Here in Massachusetts:**

In Massachusetts, teachers with at least a bachelor's degree earn, on average, \$32,500. All other professionals with at least a bachelor's degree earn, on average, \$44,800. Similarly – but even more strikingly -- teachers in Massachusetts with at least a master's degree earn, on average, \$36,362, while their non-teaching counterparts in this State earn, on average, \$56,587. (*Quality Counts*) To begin to address the gap between teaching and non-teaching professional salaries, the State has sponsored the Teacher Career Advancement Program (T-CAP). T-CAP provides grants to schools that create multiple career paths and expanded roles for teachers. As part of T-CAP, schools can develop high-paying career tracks for master teachers. As of 1999, the T-CAP program was limited to 10 pilot schools.

Across the nation, 20% of the 1992-93 college graduates who began teaching by 1993-94 had left after 3 years. In fact, teachers who did not participate in an induction program were twice as likely to leave teaching. (*Baccalaureate and Beyond* from *Quality Counts*) To address the needs – and high attrition rates -- of beginning teachers, the State has become one of only 28 states which mandates or funds induction programs for beginning teachers. Currently the State is working toward having each beginning teacher paired with a veteran mentor teacher. In 1999, the State sponsored Mentor Training Institutes for almost 100 districts. In 2000, the State plans to expand this program. At this time, however, only 20% of new teachers participate in these programs. Massachusetts is one of only 18 states that requires or provides such preparation. (*Quality Counts*)

The Department of Education reports that, for the 1998-99 school year, the statewide average minimum teacher salary was \$27,387 and the state-wide average maximum teacher salary was \$52,037. As part of the early education reform efforts, the State enacted legislation which set and funded minimum teacher salary levels at \$18,000 and \$20,000, subject to local acceptance, for the 1987-88 school year (MGL Ch. 71,s 40). During the same period of time, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by nearly 50%. The Task Force suggests that it is time to set a new minimum teacher salary for the State.

The State has also initiated the Master Teachers Program, which provides master teachers with \$5,000 per year for up to 10 years, provided both that they meet specified requirements and that they act as mentors to beginning teachers. The State is currently considering the development of a performance review process as another route toward becoming a "master teacher." To add additional support for novice teachers across the State, the Department of Education also offers case study seminars. 750 beginning teachers are currently participating in this program.

#### **Recommended Actions**

1. Establish and fund a minimum salary level for all teachers in the State, similar to what was done in 1987, in order to bridge the gap between the entering salary levels of teachers and those of other professionals.
  2. Make teachers' financial incentives more competitive with those of other professions.
    - a) Continue to offer signing bonuses to outstanding teacher candidates.
    - b) Reward exemplary teachers who stay in the classroom with bonuses. Consider expanding the current Teacher Career Advancement Program (T-CAP) beyond the 10 pilot schools.
    - c) Explore providing summer job opportunities with business partners in order both to augment teacher salaries and to enhance teacher growth and effectiveness.
    - d) Explore the compensation implications of increasing the length of the school year for all teachers.
  3. Make teachers' benefits more competitive with those of other professions.
    - a) Reduce retirement contributions for new teachers through State subsidies (currently 9%+) and consider changes to the teacher retirement system which would enable career teachers to maximize retirement benefits.
    - b) Fund tuition reduction programs for all current teachers pursuing courses at colleges and universities.
    - c) Encourage districts to reinstate sabbatical leaves, which are conditioned on continued service, for experienced teachers.
4. Address the need for effective induction and mentoring of beginning teachers.
  - a) Reduce teaching loads for first year teachers and require mentoring or observation of other classrooms.
  - b) Continue to expand State funding to offer support/mentoring programs for first and second year teachers. Have trained mentors in all school districts working on a one-to-one basis with these novice teachers.
  - c) Ensure prospective teachers have at least a six-month – and preferably a year

- supervised internship prior to starting a permanent position.
- d) Provide more supervision and evaluation opportunities in the first three years of employment with multiple evaluators.
- e) Provide seminars for new teachers in their first three years of employment in such areas as curriculum integration to the statewide curriculum frameworks, multiple approaches to student learning and assessment, communication and conferencing strategies, and special education identification and strategies.
- f) Ensure that comprehensive pre-service orientation programs are held in each district.

5. Take steps to improve the conditions of teaching.

- a) Ensure that teachers teach in their areas of preparation and certification.
- b) Sponsor a pilot program to allow ten districts to develop plans to reduce the amount of non-classroom teaching duties for teachers (i.e. hall duties, bathroom monitoring, lunchroom duties etc.). Encourage local school districts to explore alternative staffing and scheduling models that afford teachers more individual and common planning.
- c) Sustain and enhance opportunities for teachers to meet with their peers and a trained facilitator at regular intervals in the first two years of employment to develop teaching strategies, for professional discussion, for reflection, and to provide information and support.
- d) Continue to provide increased opportunities for career growth within the teaching profession, such as the T-CAP and Master Teachers Programs. Develop a cadre of teachers who serve locally or regionally as teacher trainers. Develop differentiated staffing systems to reward exemplary and/or outstanding mentor teachers (providing more of a career ladder for teachers).

- e) Ensure that classroom facilities and resources are conducive to teaching across all districts, and consider placing a statewide cap on student class size in core academic subjects.
- f) Promote teacher excellence recognition programs, such as the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year and Boston's "Golden Apple" awards. Encourage school districts to collaborate with parent organizations and businesses to develop such programs.

## Appendix

### **A. Disclaimer**

In the three months during which the Task Force was active, a number of key reports were published. Among these were the American Council on Education (ACE) report entitled *To Touch the Future*, the NPEAT report entitled *Recruiting and Retaining Effective Teachers for Urban Schools*, and the Education Week report *Quality Counts 2000: Who Should Teach?* In addition, numerous other articles have been written which herald the concerns about the teacher shortage or outline the steps being recommended to address the shortage. In addition to these articles and reports, the Task Force had access to many other reports, old and new, which cover much of the same ground. While each of these reports is listed in the Appendix to this report, it is difficult to determine which report or article provided which insight to a specific recommendation. From a practitioner's point of view, much of what is included in this report is derived from common everyday experiences and not necessarily taken from a specific source. Specific sources are identified where the suggestion is taken directly from that source.

### **B. Sources**

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **Report to the Joint Commission on Educator Preparation From the Task Force on Teacher Compensation**

**June 6, 2000**

**JOINT COMMISSION ON EDUCATOR PREPARATION  
TASK FORCE ON TEACHER COMPENSATION**

**Members of the Task Force**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Teacher Compensation Task Force was created by the Joint Commission on Teacher Preparation in March 2000 to make specific recommendations regarding the level of teacher compensation. We were created by a vote of the Commission that said:

The Joint Commission shall appoint a task force to conduct research and make recommendations concerning the scale of compensation necessary to attract and retain teachers of the highest quality for the classrooms of the Commonwealth. This task force shall report its findings to the Joint Commission, and the Joint Commission shall review its findings and issue its own report no later than the end of June.

The following report represents our best effort to fulfill our mandate.

We have considered a number of options, detailed below, however, **our recommendation should be clear. We are recommending a package of incentives, all of which are aimed at recruiting the highest caliber people into the teaching profession.** While retention of teachers is also an important issue, for reasons explained at the end of this report, the task force recommends that the state focus its efforts on improving recruitment. We are therefore recommending a range of incentives including:

- ◆ A statewide minimum salary of \$35,000
- ◆ A change in the teacher retirement contribution
- ◆ Opportunity for an extended year for some teachers at an additional \$5,000
- ◆ Support for Professional Development for young teachers
- ◆ Expanded Scholarships and Loan Forgiveness
- ◆ A Bonus for new teachers in areas of greatest need
- ◆ A special stipend for mid-career people seeking to enter teaching

In making these recommendations, we must note that Massachusetts is competing for teachers against at least two opposing realities:

- ◆ The higher pay in virtually every other major field requiring a college education. In the National Association of Colleges and Employers Survey for 1998-99 (Appendix A), the initial offers to college graduates across the country with non-technical baccalaureate degrees ranged from a high of \$41,222 in information systems and \$41,094 in consulting to a low of \$26,326 in teaching and \$25,900 in customer services. This gap has widened steadily since 1994, and teacher salaries were equal to 72% of the average salary for all college graduates in 1998. (See Appendix B.) To ask dedicated and able people to take positions paying \$5,000 to 15,000 less than comparable entry level positions is to guarantee that many of the best and the brightest will be excluded from the profession.
- ◆ The higher level of starting teacher salaries in nearby states. According to the attached report of the American Federation of Teachers (Appendix C), Massachusetts lagged behind Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey in starting salaries for teachers in 1997-98. In 1998-99, the gap between starting salaries in Massachusetts and Connecticut widened to nearly 10 percent, with Connecticut school districts offering an average starting salary of \$29,992 compared to the \$27,387 average offered in Massachusetts. It is not surprising that a recruiter from one of the state's largest school districts found a cool reception when he visited a nearby college's teacher preparation program. The students informed him: "We've been surfing the Internet about salaries and we're all going to Connecticut!"

The problem of low teacher salaries is not new. As public education spread in Massachusetts and the United States in the 1840s and 1850s, teaching also changed from primarily a male to primarily a female profession through the work of a generation of reformers led by Catharine Beecher and Horace Mann, who argued that women were by nature, more nurturing and could be hired more cheaply because they had few other career options. In spite of limited changes, the lower level salaries for teachers--because teaching was "women's work," and women truly did have fewer options--remained more or less the case until the last generation. The women's movement, and the general changes in American culture and American laws in the last two decades has ended a major subsidy on which schools depended for over a century: the limited options available to women. Now women have virtually the same range of professional options as men. And many women are exercising these options. The result is that an entirely fresh look at the cost and financing of the teaching profession is needed. If half of the population is no longer a captive audience, a market economy would suggest that either salaries must rise dramatically or the quality of people entering the profession will fall dramatically. The last generation of women who entered teaching when significant career limitations existed are now retiring. The question facing the Joint Commission is, what comes next?

After careful review, our Task Force concluded that a minimum starting salary for the Commonwealth, while desirable, is not, in itself, a sufficient inducement to enter teaching. We note that some districts are already much closer to the minimum wage we propose than others. We also note that some incentives will appeal to some while others will appeal to others. We need a mix of people in the profession.

We believe that the package of incentives listed above will dramatically improve the appeal of teaching in Massachusetts and will therefore improve the quality of those who do, in fact, enter the teaching profession. Each of these incentives is discussed in turn on the following pages.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A \$35,000 Statewide Minimum Salary.**

We recommend a state wide minimum salary of \$35,000 for all teachers. The minimum salary would need to be funded by the legislature by calculating the amount needed to raise all teachers in the district to the minimum \$35,000 level as of a specified date.

### **Change in Teacher Retirement Contribution with a Maximum Contribution of 5%.**

Teachers hired before January 1, 1975 contribute 5% of their salary to the state retirement system. Teachers hired between January 1, 1975 and December 31, 1983 pay 7%. Teachers hired between January 1, 1984 and June 30, 1996 pay 8% and those hired after July 1, 1996 pay 9%. In addition, all teachers hired after January 1, 1979 pay an additional 2% on any income over \$30,000 per year. The current early retirement proposal contains a provision that would set the payment at 11% of compensation for anyone entering teaching after July 1, 2001. For a new teacher with a \$30,000 salary, having between \$2700 and \$3300 deducted off the top effectively reduces the teacher's income in a significant way. While this may not be a factor in the decision to enter the profession for many, we have certainly heard reports of a high level of discontent among first year teachers because of this policy. We recommend that the Joint Commission ask the legislature to return to the pre-1976 level 5% contribution to the teacher retirement fund and that the legislature specifically appropriate funds to match that amount so that the contribution in the teacher's name would remain at 10%. It is essential that the retirement fund continue to be financed in a fiscally responsible manner, but this should not be done solely on the basis of direct payments by teachers.

## **Opportunity for An Extended Year for Some New Teachers at An Additional \$5,000.**

Teachers have a shorter work year than people in many other professions. Some people enter teaching specifically because they want a lifestyle that allows them more personal time than in some other professions. Many of these are among our best teachers and we do not want to make the profession less appealing to these recruits. Yet many others enter teaching will and able to work a longer year and in needing the financial rewards of people who are employed full time throughout the year.

At the same time, districts could put a cadre of year-round teachers to good use in a variety of tasks, including curriculum development and planning, summer school instruction, professional development activities, or other assignments specifically geared to improving instruction. Our task force, therefore, recommends a state-funded program that would enable districts across the state to offer extended year contracts to 400 teachers or approximately 10% of the new hires each year. The Superintendent would select the recipients of these extended year contracts and the district would assign special responsibilities. This is not a bonus and should not be viewed in this way. The stipend would be for an additional five weeks of employment. In receiving the state funds, the district would be obligated to develop a specific contract with individuals that would indicate the specific tasks to be performed.

## **Support for 50% of the Cost of Professional Development for Young Teachers.**

Virtually every national and local study of education has recommended expanding professional development options for teachers, especially strengthening their subject matter knowledge. The Board of Higher Education has already established a tuition waiver program for new teachers at public colleges and universities. Teachers need to keep current in their fields. Novice teachers, especially, need a variety of opportunities to reflect on practice and learn more about their field of instruction. Indeed, the Joint Commission has recommended a dramatic strengthening of the Commonwealth's standards for teacher professional development. We believe that most new teachers share in their commitment to professional development. But professional development activities can be expensive, especially expensive for those just entering the profession with still modest salaries and, in many cases, significant debt. We therefore urge that the state provide support for all teachers during the first three years of full time teaching. In addition to the current tuition waiver at public institutions, we propose a state policy of paying for 50% of the cost all of professional development activities--whether they be formal courses, workshops, or other more or less formal professional development activities up to a maximum annual payment of \$800, for those expending \$1600 or more.

We have not recommended payment of the full cost. We believe that people will be invested more if they pay part of the cost. Of course, we would also support scholarships from colleges and school districts to make up part of the remaining cost. We also note that there is a general fear that low cost low quality professional development activities can drive out higher cost but far more effective activities. By having the state cover half of the cost, this discrepancy is reduced, although not eliminated. We are thus, we think, proposing an incentive that will both make teaching more appealing as a profession to enter and a way of improving the teacher knowledge base that should improve instruction for the Commonwealth's young people.

## **Scholarships and Loan Forgiveness**

Many college students are deeply in debt when they graduate. While the Commonwealth has developed a number of programs to reduce indebtedness for teachers and teacher candidates, we believe that the system should be extended to cover serious remaining gaps. At present, through the Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarships, the Board of Higher Education awards full remission of tuition and fees at any public college in the state to academically successful high-

school graduates in return for four years of teaching. Students already enrolled in public colleges can get tuition scholarships for their last two years by enrolling in teacher education programs in fields of demonstrated shortage. We endorse the proposal to extend these programs to private colleges and universities by an amount equal to the most expensive public institution.

Teachers employed in high-need school districts can obtain reimbursement for their loan payments up to \$1800 a year through the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program of the Board of Education. To qualify, candidates must have received honors designation or have been in the top 15 percent of their undergraduate class at any institution, in state, out-of-state, public or private. This program serves a total of 700 teachers a year and is able to serve about 160 new teachers each year.

Currently the Attracting Excellence to Teaching program is limited to those teaching in high need school districts. We recommend a loan forgiveness policy for any college graduate who has outstanding education loans and who enters full time teaching in a public school of the Commonwealth as follows:

10% per year up to \$1500 per year for a maximum of five years.

15% per year up to \$2500 per year for teachers who teach in designated urban or rural districts or in fields designated by the Commissioner of Education as having a teacher shortage (i.e., special needs, foreign language, math, and science).

This might best be done through an expansion of the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program or through a new program.

We are convinced that such a policy would do much to make teaching more appealing to talented college graduates.

#### **A Bonus of \$12,000 for New Teachers in Areas of Greatest Need.**

For fields designated by the Commissioner of Education as having the greatest need for candidates, such as mathematics, the sciences, and special education, or for teaching in specified urban or rural districts, we recommend a bonus of \$12,000 to be paid in thirds at the end of the first, second, and third year of teaching.

#### **A Special One-Year Stipend of \$17,500 for post-baccalaureate candidates seeking to enter teaching through an apprentice model (Route Three in the current draft regulations).**

The emerging teacher shortage is not going to be met if only the graduates of teacher preparation programs are considered. Many mid career professionals have unique gifts to bring to teaching. People with years of experience in fields like engineering, business, or the military, for example, can bring a wealth of subject matter knowledge and commitment to teaching. In addition, some recent college graduates may not have considered teaching while in college but discover an interest in their senior year or soon after graduation. However, the transition can take time--more for some, less for others. Our task force applauds the emergence of intensive programs followed by continued mentoring and support. However, these programs do not work for, or appeal to, everyone. Different people come to the profession with different levels of skill and confidence. Some mid -career professionals will find teaching more appealing if they can have more time to prepare so that they can enter the classroom with confidence and skill.

Our task force has selected a figure of \$17,500--one-half of the proposed minimum salary for teachers--as an appropriate stipend for interns who would spend a year in programs that include

preparation in both subject matter and pedagogy and in the actual practice of classroom teaching under appropriate supervision. Given the current need for teachers who might enter through alternative routes, we recommend that 500 such internships be made available each year until the current need diminishes. This stipended internship will not be for everyone. But for some, it will make teaching achievable and appealing.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In addition to the above recommendations, we call the Joint Commission's attention to two factors that should be considered in reviewing our recommendations:

- ◆ Cost and Financing of a Minimum Salary
- ◆ Unique Appeal of Careers in Teaching

Each of these factors needs our consideration.

### **Cost and Financing of a Minimum Salary.**

The reality is that there is only one possible funding source for the incentives we propose: the general budget of the Commonwealth as approved by the state legislature. Since the passage of Proposition 2 ½ the state cannot assign "unfunded mandates" to local governments. A state minimum salary for teachers would certainly meet the criteria of an "unfunded mandate." If the state is serious about education reform, and specifically about attracting top quality teachers for every classroom in the Commonwealth, then permanent state funds are the best source for this worthy objective.

### **Unique Appeal of Careers in Teaching.**

In reviewing the literature on the question of appropriate compensation, we were reminded of an issue raised in the Joint Commission's deliberations. There are important non-salary factors that induce many people to enter teaching. The joy of seeing a child learn cannot be counted in dollars and cents. Some women and men teach because they value the summers, want to be able to be home with children in the late afternoon, and want to have the other vacation times offered to educators.

We believe that these inducements will continue to be an important part of the appeal of a teaching career, as they have been in the past. It is also important to recognize that their value is often a highly personal matter. It is not unusual for some persons to discover in the first year or two of teaching that it is not the right career for them. Conversely, others find, sometimes to their surprise, a vocation for life.

The task force is convinced that among today's college graduates there are many potential teachers who would find the non-pecuniary satisfactions of a teaching career very rewarding. The problem that the profession faces today is that the fiscal inducements to entering teaching are so low, these individuals never discover the other satisfactions this career can offer. Low starting pay, combined with the need to begin repaying student loans and the other costs of starting independent households, persuade many to pursue other careers for financial reasons.

The first priority to public policy should therefore be to make teaching more attractive at the entry level. The package of benefits that we are recommending still does not bring teachers up to the level of compensation received by professionals in many other fields. However, we believe that adopting our recommendations will make important strides in closing the gap and will allow many able and dedicated people to become teachers who might otherwise be lost to the profession. If this is true, then the benefits we recommend will be well worth the cost to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth.

## APPENDIX A

**Table I-9**

Beginning and Average Teacher Salary in 1997-98 Ranked by Average Salary Within Region

State	Average Salary	Beginning Salary	State	Average Salary	Beginning Salary
<b>NEW ENGLAND</b>			<b>SOUTHEAST</b>		
Connecticut	\$51,727	\$29,506	Georgia	\$37,412	\$26,706
Rhode Island	44,506	26,300	Virginia	37,024	25,272
Massachusetts	44,285	27,238	Tennessee	34,584	22,140
New Hampshire	36,663	23,927	Florida	34,473	25,266
Vermont	36,299	25,183	Kentucky	34,453	23,536
Maine	34,349	21,554	South Carolina	33,608	23,427
<b>MIDEAST</b>			West Virginia	33,396	22,529
			North Carolina	33,123	22,150
New Jersey	\$50,284	\$28,319	Alabama	32,799	27,388
New York	48,712	30,204	Arkansas	32,119	21,000
Pennsylvania	47,542	29,581	Louisiana	30,090	22,843
District of Columbia	44,746	27,234	Mississippi	28,691	20,630
Delaware	42,439	25,493	<b>ROCKY MOUNTAINS</b>		
Maryland	41,404	27,010	Colorado	\$37,240	\$24,867
<b>GREAT LAKES</b>			Utah	32,981	22,241
Michigan	\$48,361	\$27,064	Idaho	32,834	20,248
Illinois	43,707	28,183	Wyoming	32,022	22,230
Indiana	39,752	24,716	Montana	30,617	21,045
Minnesota	39,104	26,266	<b>FAR WEST</b>		
Ohio	39,099	22,535	Alaska	\$48,275	\$33,162
Wisconsin	38,179	24,077	California	44,585	27,852
<b>PLAINS</b>			Oregon	42,301	26,098
Iowa	\$34,084	\$22,475	Nevada	40,572	28,641
Missouri	34,001	24,125	Washington	38,755	23,860
Kansas	33,800	22,445	Hawaii	36,598	26,744
Nebraska	32,668	21,949	<b>OUTLYING AREAS</b>		
North Dakota	28,231	19,146	Guam	\$27,827	\$26,197
South Dakota	27,839	20,340	Puerto Rico	24,000	18,000
<b>SOUTHWEST</b>			Virgin Islands	33,311	21,913
Arizona	\$34,071	\$24,917			
Texas	33,537	24,736	U.S. AVERAGE	\$39,347	\$25,735
Oklahoma	30,940	23,676			
New Mexico	30,309	23,297			

Source: American Federation of Teachers, annual survey of state departments of education.

## APPENDIX B

**Table III-2**

### Beginning Teacher Salaries and Job Offers for New College Graduates

		1991	1992	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>College Graduates</b>								
	Average Salary Offer	\$28,209	\$28,688	\$29,029	\$30,236	\$31,721	\$32,909	\$35,524
	Annual Change		1.6%	1.3%*	4.2%	4.9%	3.7%	7.9%
	Change 1991 to 1994			2.9%*				
	Change 1994 to 1998							22.4%
<b>Beginning Teachers</b>								
	Average Salary Offer	\$21,481	\$22,171	\$23,231	\$23,997	\$24,285	\$25,015	\$25,735
	Annual Change		3.2%	4.8%*	3.3%	1.2%	3.0%	2.9%
	Change 1991 to 1994			8.1%				
	Change 1994 to 1998							10.8%
<b>Beginning Teacher to College Grad Salary Ratio</b>		0.76	0.77	0.80	0.79	0.77	0.76	0.72

\*This represents a two-year change--1992 to 1994. Data for 1993 are unavailable.

Sources: AFT calculations from College Placement Council, American Federation of Teachers, annual survey of state departments of education.

## APPENDIX C

JOB FUNCTION	NUMBER OF OFFERS	AVERAGE	90TH	10TH	JOB FUNCTION	NUMBER OF OFFERS	AVERAGE	90TH	10TH
<b>BACHELOR'S DEGREE - SUMMARY BY JOB FUNCTION NONTECHNICAL DEGREES</b>									
ACCOUNTING (PUBLIC)	1430	\$34,943	\$42,000	\$28,000	FIELD ENGINEERING	28	\$37,171	\$39,200	\$36,000
ACCOUNTING (PRIVATE)	690	33,065	40,000	25,000	MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRIAL	22	35,638	43,000	26,000
AUDITING (PUBLIC)	435	35,515	41,000	30,000	SYSTEMS / PROGRAMMING	73	40,264	45,000	32,000
AUDITING (PRIVATE)	165	33,768	39,000	28,000	POWER SYSTEMS	1	50,000	•	•
COMMERCIAL BANKING (CONSUMER)	145	29,533	38,000	22,000	SOFTWARE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT	76	40,228	45,600	34,000
COMMERCIAL BANKING (LENDING)	111	32,369	39,000	24,000	HARDWARE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT	5	31,603	•	•
INVESTMENT BANKING (CORPORATE FINANCE)	138	36,473	41,000	26,500	RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	18	30,334	•	•
INVESTMENT BANKING (MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS)	24	39,771	46,000	30,000	TESTING	8	39,938	•	•
INVESTMENT BANKING (REAL ESTATE)	14	35,107	•	•	PROCESS ENGINEERING	4	37,600	•	•
INVESTMENT BANKING (SALES & TRADING)	69	33,840	40,000	25,000	PRODUCTION ENGINEERING	7	36,126	•	•
FINANCIAL / TREASURY ANALYSIS	823	35,800	42,500	26,998	PROJECT ENGINEERING	20	36,208	49,000	29,900
PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT/BROKERAGE	136	33,018	42,000	24,000	QUALITY CONTROL	18	33,250	•	•
INSURANCE - UNDERWRITING	81	31,054	36,000	25,000	OTHER ENGINEERING	62	37,651	45,240	28,000
INSURANCE - CLAIMS	138	28,998	35,000	24,500	INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE/OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY	1	28,000	•	•
DESIGN / GRAPHIC ARTS	74	27,352	35,000	20,000	ADMINISTRATIVE (HEALTHCARE)	33	29,274	40,000	20,000
MEDIA PLANNING	40	26,474	35,000	20,000	DIETICIAN	2	15,000	•	•
REPORTING	39	19,755	27,000	14,000	MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY	2	49,500	•	•
COMMUNICATIONS - PRODUCTION	72	29,234	39,000	20,000	NURSES / PERSONAL CARE	9	21,124	•	•
PUBLIC RELATIONS	86	25,594	31,000	20,000	SPEECH PATHOLOGY/AUDIOLOGY	10	30,958	•	•
WRITING / EDITING	81	27,015	37,000	20,000	OTHER HEALTH RELATED	47	24,551	36,000	16,000
ADVERTISING	72	27,288	33,000	22,000	SOCIAL SERVICES - ADMINISTRATION	53	23,700	28,806	18,000
BRAND / PRODUCT MANAGEMENT	178	30,632	40,000	21,000	COUNSELING	83	21,833	28,000	16,640
BUYER / MERCHANDISING	222	32,223	37,500	26,000	FUNDRAISING / DEVELOPMENT	25	24,675	38,500	17,000
CUSTOMER SERVICE	315	25,908	35,000	18,000	SOCIAL WORK	88	22,457	26,700	17,000
DISTRIBUTION	90	33,300	40,000	25,000	COMPUTER PROGRAMMING	176	37,855	45,000	28,000
MARKET RESEARCH	157	31,948	40,000	24,000	INFORMATION SYSTEMS	407	41,222	48,000	32,000
PURCHASING	30	32,601	37,500	25,000	SYSTEMS ANALYSIS & DESIGN	256	39,981	48,000	30,000
SALES	1817	30,522	40,000	22,000	ACTUARIAL	8	40,200	•	•
GOVERNMENT - EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, GENERAL	26	25,686	30,000	20,800	AGRICULTURE/NATURAL RESOURCES	5	26,890	•	•
GOVERNMENT - FINANCE, TAXATION, MONETARY POLICY	27	30,355	40,000	22,000	ARCHITECTURE	5	32,100	•	•
ECONOMIC PROGRAMS	3	34,992	•	•	CONSULTING	1176	41,094	48,000	33,000
LAW ENFORCEMENT	55	29,403	40,000	20,000	HUMAN RESOURCES	249	29,524	37,548	22,000
MILITARY	54	29,768	36,000	22,500	MANAGEMENT TRAINEE	1239	29,705	36,500	24,000
NATIONAL SECURITY	1	28,000	•	•	MATH / STATISTICIANS	3	36,455	•	•
URBAN / REGIONAL PLANNING	7	23,939	•	•	PARALEGAL	61	27,541	30,500	25,000
DESIGN / CONSTRUCT	16	31,869	•	•	PERFORMING ARTS (ENTERTAINMENT)	31	24,534	30,158	17,500
ENVIRONMENTAL / SANITATION	3	29,997	•	•	RELIGIOUS OCCUPATIONS	7	25,180	•	•
					RESEARCH - NONTECHNICAL	72	28,344	34,000	22,000
					RESEARCH - TECHNICAL	24	29,130	42,000	18,500
					TEACHING	1063	28,321	31,253	20,500

## Teacher Compensation Task Force Report

### Appendix D

#### ESTIMATES OF COST

1. **The \$35,000 Minimum Salary.** We obtained 1999-2000 salary schedules and the number of teachers actually employed at each step and level of the schedule for five communities with varying minimum starting salaries. We calculated the cost of raising the minimum salary to \$35,000 for each of these school districts. We then calculated the proportion of the total statewide school enrollment represented by each of the sample districts and projected what it would cost to increase salaries in the same way statewide. The estimates derived in this way range from \$800,000 annually based on Boston, to \$36 million annually based on Peabody and Framingham, \$44.9 million annually based on Springfield, and \$73 million annually based on Quincy.
2. Change in the teacher's retirement contribution. **Not known.**
3. Extended year for 400 teachers @ \$5,000 = **\$2,000,000 annually**
4. Support for Professional Development for new teachers for their first three years. Estimate 12,000 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year teachers/year @ \$800 = **\$9,600,000 annually**
5. **Expanded scholarships and Loan Forgiveness.** The attracting Excellence Program serves 700 teachers with \$1.4 million annually. Doubling it would cost an additional \$1.4 million. Tomorrow's Teacher's Scholarships serves 300 teacher candidates, but has funds for 700. It might be extended to candidates enrolled in private institutions within the monies already appropriated. The Board of Higher Education is authorized to spend up to \$500,000 in tuition waivers for the Incentives for Aspiring Teachers program. Doubling that program would add \$500,000. The added cost for these programs can be estimated at **\$1.9 million annually**.
6. **Bonuses for New Teachers in Areas of Greatest Need.** \$12,000 for 400 teachers = **\$4,800,000 annually**
7. **Stipends for Mid-Career People Seeking to Enter Teaching.** \$17,500 for 500 mid-career candidates = **\$8,750,000 annually**



## **TASK FORCES OF THE JOINT COMMISSION**

### **The Task Force on Teacher Preparation Programs**

Chair: Dr. Jean Krasnow, Independent Consultant and formerly Dean of the Graduate School, Wheelock College

Members:

William Dandridge, Dean, School of Education, Lesley College

Eleanor Demont, Teacher, Brookline Public Schools

Mel Bernstein, Dean Arts, Sciences & Technology, Tufts University

### **The Task Force on Teacher Assessment**

Chair: Frederick Tirrell

Associate Professor of Educational Administration, Bridgewater State College

Members:

Susan Freedman, Co-Chair, Beginning Teacher Center of Teachers21 and Simmons College

Nadya Higgins, Executive Director, Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association

Dale Ballou, Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst

James Mead, Director of Technology, Buckingham, Brown & Nichols School

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### **The Task Force on Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

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Joseph Arangio, Principal, Milton High School

Donald McCallion, Director Human Resources, Framingham Public Schools

Liz Fideler, Executive Vice President, Recruiting New Teachers, Inc.

Staff: Neal Brown, Doctoral Candidate, Harvard Graduate School of Education

### **The Task Force on Teacher Compensation**

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Members:

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